A

Funeral SERMON

On Occaſion of the

DEATH

Of the late Reverend and Learned

Mr. *Benjamin Robinſon*,

Who departed this Life *April* 30, 1724.

PREACH'D at

Little St. HELENS,

MAY 10.

With ſome Account of his

LIFE and CHARACTER.

By *JOHN CUMMING*, M. A.
Miniſter of the *Scots Church*, in *London*.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

TO

Mrs. Anne Robinſon.

MADAM,

AS you, and your good Family, put upon me the Honour of tranſmitting to Poſterity, in a Funeral Sermon, *and* Character, *ſo venerable a Name as that of your deceaſed Husband, this whole Performance, ſuch as it is, properly belongs to you. Sorry I am there is Occaſion to make you a preſent of this Nature, which, if it had pleaſed* GOD, *to hear our Prayers for the Continuance of ſo valuable a Life as Mr.* Robinſon's, *would have been deferred many Years.*

THE Sermon *is plain and practical, on a Subject of univerſal Concern. I had in my Eye a great Example of ſucceſsful Diligence in his* MASTER'S *Work. One whom* GOD *alſo honoured and diſtinguiſhed*

with ſingular Marks of his Approbation. When I made Compariſons, my Heart trembled. I was willing to take that Opportunity to excite myſelf and others to more Watchfulneſs in every Part of our Duty, that when our appointed Work and Time here on Earth are ended, we may be prepared to give up our Accounts with a like Joy. So that I am in no Pain as to the Propriety of the Argument, were but the Management equal to it. And I hope ſome Things have been offered that may be of particular Uſe to you in your preſent afflicted State. Diſcourſes of this Nature, attended with indubitable Scripture Evidence, may be adapted to do more real Service, and to impreſs a truer *Conviction, than elaborate, and particular Deſcriptions of the* unexperienc'd *and* unrevealed *Glories and Entertainments of an* inviſible *World, in which* Fancy *often ſupplies the Want of* Viſion. *Some find it difficult to expreſs, what it is impoſſible for them rightly to conceive.*

I have taken the Liberty allowed on the like Occaſions, to make ſome Additions, where I thought it moſt proper. And other Things I have expreſs'd in fewer Words, than for Want of Time, I was prepared to do, in the Delivery of the Sermon. *The* CHARACTER *is much enlarg'd. Which (with other unavoidable Incidents) muſt be*

be my Excuſe for ſo late a Publication.

IF what I have attempted in both, *may anſwer the Deſign; if I have the Satisfaction of your favourable Acceptance; if any thereby are awaken'd from a State of carnal Security, to mind their great and neceſſary Work betimes, or excited by a holy Emulation, to imitate ſo lovely a Pattern as is here propoſed to them; if any Glory thereby redounds to God, or Good to Souls, I ſhall bleſs God on that Account, and think my Time and Pains well laid out.*

TOU'LL allow me, MADAM, *on this Occaſion, to own my Obligations to the* Reverend *Mr.* HARMOND HOOD, *for furniſhing me with ſuch Materials, as put me in a Capacity of doing ſome Juſtice to the* Memory *of one of the beſt Men I ever had the Happineſs to be acquainted with. The generous Liberty he allowed me in uſing his* Memoirs, *renders the Obligation double. I know, I need his Pardon for this publick Mention of his Name, without Leave ask'd. But the inviolable Friendſhip, and ſtrict Intimacy there were between Mr.* ROBINSON *and him, and their* Relation *as* Fellow Labourers *in the ſame Pulpit, for a Courſe of many Years, ſeemed to demand it, and will, I doubt not, be an Apology for me, with all others,*

others, who know how much Mr. HOOD *ſympathiſes with your Griefs and Loſs.*

MADAM, *I would ſtudiouſly avoid ſaying any Thing that might open afreſh the Springs of your Sorrow. Your Loſs is truly great, and irreparable by any Thing this World can give. But God, who is an all-ſufficient, and an ever-enduring Portion, can, and will I hope, render it tolerable. There are peculiar Promiſes made to the* Widow *and* Fatherleſs. *And* thoſe *of faithful* Miniſters, *whoſe conſtant Attendance on divine Things as their proper Calling, barr'd their purſuing the Advantages of this preſent World, how qualified ſoever they might, in other Reſpects, be to fill up the moſt diſtinguiſhing Stations in civil Life, ſeem to have a ſpecial Claim to them.*

YOU want not any particular Inſtructions, how to carry it as a Chriſtian, under this afflicting Stroke. What you moſt need, is the Preſence of God with you, and the Conſolations of his Spirit to keep you from fainting. And theſe are to be obtained by fervent Prayer, holy Watching, and a firm Dependance on the promis'd Mercy of God, through a Mediator. Let the unſpeakable Happineſs your deareſt Relative now poſſeſſes, and which you wait to partake of, moderate your Griefs. If you loved me

(*ſaid*

(*ſaid Chriſt to his Apoſtles*) you would rejoice, becauſe I ſaid, I go to my Father. *You have ſeen his* Patience *in Tribulation, how it confirmed all his other Graces, and wrought the moſt abundant* Experience *of the Love of God. An humble Submiſſion to the Hand of Providence in all our Troubles, and Expectation of every needful Bleſſing from a God in Covenant, is the Way to have our preſent Evils turn to the greateſt Good. If by theſe we are made Partakers of divine Holineſs, we gain infinitely by them.*

YOUR dutiful Children, though they ſhare in your Loſs, are yet a ſurviving Comfort to you. And the more ſo, that, beſides the Fruits of natural Affection, the Grace of God that is in them, will effectually engage them to walk worthy of their deceaſed Parent, and at the ſame Time, ſecure that Honour, *and thoſe tender Regards which they owe the Living. May they never forget the dying Charge of their affectionate, pious Father, nor fruſtrate his Expectations concerning them.*

ALLOW me, with a ſincere and ſympathiſing Affection, to expreſs my hearty Wiſhes and Prayers for you and yours. May the Head and Husband of the Church be unto you more than all Relations. May he ſupport your mournful Widowhood, and comfort you in your moſt ſenſible Affliction.

May

May he ſanctify this, and all other Trials to you and yours. May your worthy Son, and vertuous Daughters be preſerv'd and proſper'd, prove a Bleſſing to you, and an Ornament to Religion. And may you be enabled, by divine Grace, ſo to improve the Changes of this World, as that you may always have an aſſured comfortable Intereſt in a better. I am, with much Reſpect to the whole Family,

MADAM,

Your very affectionate Friend,

London, July 1. 1724.

and moſt humble Servant,

JOHN CUMMING.

MARK xiii. 37.

What I ſay unto you, I ſay unto all, Watch.

WE are now aſſembled together to pay our laſt publick Reſpects to the MEMORY of that excellent *Miniſter* of *Chriſt*, the Reverend and Learned Mr. *Benjamin Robinſon*. A precious Name, and worthy of *everlaſting Remembrance*. Many are the Conſiderations that aggravate our Loſs in his *Deceaſe*. The Eclipſe of great *Luminaries* uſually filleth Men with awful Thoughts, becauſe they *know not what Evil ſhall be upon the Earth*, or what *Changes* may follow. The *ſetting* of ſo bright and leading a *Star* as the preſent mournful *Subject*, ſoon following the Death of other worthy *Miniſters* of the Goſpel, in whoſe Light and Labours many have rejoic'd, cannot but be an Occaſion of ſolemn Reflection to thoſe among us who conſider how much there may be of *Divine Judgment* in removing ſuch great and *publick Bleſſings* from an unthankful World, *unworthy of them*, and who knew not how to value, nor improve the Prize that was put into their Hands, whilſt they were privileg'd with the *Life* and *Labours* of ſuch faithful and skilful *Guides*.

It is made my Province to give you ſome Inſtruction how you may beſt improve this afflicting Stroke. I endeavoured to decline a Service for which I know many others were more proper: But ſince private Excuſes would not be admitted of, I ſhall not trouble you with any publick Apology for my appearing here at this Time, but proceed to the Conſideration of that ſolemn *Charge* of *Chriſt* to *all* his *Diſciples*, which I have read unto you; in complying with which we ſhall aſcertain unto ourſelves the Conſolation and Reward of *good* and *faithful* Servants of our ſupreme *Lord* and *Maſter*, which our deceaſed *Father* and *Friend* is now in the Poſſeſſion of.

What I ſay unto you, I ſay unto all, Watch.

Our bleſſed Lord doth from the beginning of this Chapter foretell the Deſtruction of the *Temple* and *City* of *Jeruſalem* by the *Romans*, and the Diſſolution of the *Jewiſh* Church and Nation; with many awful *Prognoſticks* of that great Event, deſign'd to awaken a ſecure and preſumptuous People, fallen into the utmoſt Degeneracy. The exact Accompliſhment of all which, in a *predicted* Time, or, before the *End of that Generation*, is a permanent Evidence of the Truth of Chriſt's Doctrine. But though theſe Predictions immediately related to the Judgments of God on that People for their *obſtinate Infidelity* in rejecting the *Meſſiah*, and perſecuting all thoſe who embraced the Chriſtian Faith, yet it manifeſtly appears from the Account given of theſe Prophecies by three *Evangeliſts*, that our Saviour intended this Deſcription of the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* as a ſolemn *Type* of the Deſtruction of the World at the *laſt Day*, and his coming to the *final Judgment*. He ſpeaks of the one as a Preludium to,

and a Proof of the other. This is allowed of by the beſt *Expoſitors*. And thoſe amazing *Signs* and Revolutions which introduced that *national Ruin*, ſhall in a more magnificent manner be the Forerunners of the *great and terrible Day of the* LORD, in which he will utterly deſtroy *all* thoſe *Unbelievers who would not have him to reign over them*, and give the greateſt Demonſtration of his Love to his faithful Servants.

BUT what we are principally to attend to at preſent, is the practical Improvement our Lord commands us to make of theſe Things, from *ver.* 33. *Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the Time is to be. For the Son of Man is as a Man taking a far Journey, who left his Houſe, and gave Authority to his Servants, and to every Man his Work, and commanded the Porter to watch. Watch ye therefore (for ye know not when the Maſter of the Houſe cometh, at Even, or at Midnight, or at the Cock crowing, or in the Morning) leſt coming ſuddenly he find you ſleeping. And what I ſay unto you, I ſay unto all, Watch.*

IN theſe Paſſages we have an inſtructive Image or Repreſentation of the Church of *Chriſt* here on Earth, and of the *Relations* and *Duties* of its ſeveral Members. The Church is compared to a great *Houſe* or *Family*, in which there are many *Servants*, and every one hath his appointed Work. The Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, deſign'd by an *official* Character, is declared to be the *alone* HEAD, and *Sovereign* MASTER of this Houſe: So that there is no Plea or Excuſe for thoſe *evil Servants* who make themſelves *Lords* over *his Houſe*, or exerciſe *Dominion* over the Conſciences of their *fellow Subjects*; nor for thoſe ſeduc'd by them who aſſign a *Monarchy* or *Supremacy* in the Church to any but CHRIST, or who traiterouſly

2 Tim. ii. 20, 21.

ſubmit to any pretended legiſlative Power in Things merely belonging to the Worſhip and Service of his Houſe, uſurp'd by them. This great *Maſter* is ſaid to go *a far Journey*, or compared to a travelling Man leaving *his Houſe* for a *determinate* Time, at the preciſe end of which he will certainly return, and call his Servants to an Account. St. *Matthew* hath it, *After a long Time, the Lord of theſe Servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.*

Ch. xxv. 19.

The meaning of which is obvious to every Chriſtian. The Duty of Servants is ſet forth by the general Term of *Watching*, which is to be underſtood in a *moral* Senſe, though including alſo ſuch *bodily watching* as may ſubſerve the Purpoſes of a holy and ſpiritual Life. There may be an Alluſion here to the *Watches* into which the *Jews* divided the Night and Morning, or to the *Watchings* of Soldiers in an Army, or of the *Prieſts* and *Levites* in the Temple. The Watches of the Night are particularly referr'd to, that being a Time in which Men are moſt inclin'd to *Heavineſs*, and moſt unprovided for the Aſſaults of an Enemy, or any other ſolemn Engagement. The Argument to excite to this Duty is taken from our *not knowing* the preciſe Time in which we ſhall be called to *give an Account of ourſelves unto God.* Hence there is ſuch frequent Uſe made of the Metaphor of *Chriſt's coming as a Thief in the Night*, or unexpectedly; which is applicable not only to his coming to Judgment at the laſt Day, but to any other Viſitation of his, whether in Life, or at Death. *Watch*, ſaith he to the *Angel* of the Church of *Sardis*, or, *I will come on thee as a Thief, and thou ſhalt not know the Hour when I will come upon thee.*

Rev. iii. 3.

The Neglect of the Duty here enjoin'd is called *Sleeping*, which repreſents a State of thoughtleſs *Indolence*, and *Inactivity*. Secure Sinners are ſometimes compared to *dead* Men, whoſe Eyes are

cloſed

cloſed up, and their Ears are ſtopt, and all vital Faculties obſtructed; and ſometimes to Men *aſleep*, and overcome with the Fumes of Wine, without Reaſon or Senſe, utterly indiſpoſed for any rational or religious Operation. The Deſign of all is to awaken Men from Preſumption and vain Confidence, and engage them to the faithful diligent Proſecution of that Service which the ſupreme LORD *over all* hath allotted to them in this Life, leſt their *final Day* come upon them *unawares*, before they have reflected upon their paſt Sins and Errors, and by unfeign'd Repentance turn'd to God from their evil Ways, or before their Work is done, and ſo *that Day* find them unprepared for its advent.

THESE general Obſervations will help us to underſtand the full Senſe and Meaning of my Text, *What I ſay unto you, I ſay unto all, Watch.*

IN the diſtinct handling of which I ſhall conſider,

I. TO whom theſe Words are addreſs'd, who are concern'd in them, and under what *Characters*, or *Relations* they are repreſented.

II. THE *Duty* here commanded. And

III. The *Reaſons* by which it is enforc'd. Theſe Things I ſhall, God willing, attempt, and cloſe all with ſome proper Reflections.

We are to conſider,

I. *Firſt*, To whom theſe Words are addreſs'd, who are concern'd in them, and under what *Characters*, or *Relations* they are repreſented.

THE

The Words were immediately ſpoken to the *Apoſtles* of Christ, whom he had then *choſen*, and afterwards *commiſſion'd* to be his firſt *Ambaſſadors* to the World, to *diſciple all Nations*. Theſe therefore, were, and all that follow them in any part of their Work are, particularly concerned to *watch* in and over the Houſe of God; to *have their Loins girded about, and their Lights burning, and themſelves like unto Men that wait for the Lord.* But what he ſaid unto *them*, he ſaid unto *all* his Diſciples. All are therefore concern'd. When upon another Occaſion our great Prophet preach'd this Duty to an *innumerable Multitude of People*, and urg'd it from the ſame Motives that are mentioned in our Context, *Peter ſaid unto him, Lord, ſpeakeſt thou this unto us, or even to all?* The Anſwer given to this Queſtion was not direct, but it was ſufficient, and plainly imported that he ſpoke *to all*, that what he enjoin'd was incumbent upon, and to be done by all who expected to be own'd and rewarded by him, as his faithful Servants. But the Words of my Text are expreſs to this Purpoſe. Here then we may terminate the firſt part of our Enquiry. Not only *Miniſters* of the Goſpel, who are *Watchmen* in a particular Senſe of that Word, and of whom the ſpecial Duties belonging to that Office are expected, but *all* Chriſtians are alike concern'd in what is here recommended to them.

Luke xii. 35, 36.

Luk. xii. 41.

And all who are concern'd, are here conſider'd under the general *Character* or Relation of *Servants*, *alike* accountable to their common Lord, and *equally* exempted, as to the Service of his Houſe, from every other Sovereignty.

'Tis

'Tis true ſome are diſtinguiſh'd from others, not only with reſpect to their Fidelity, but alſo with reſpect to the particular *Offices* aſſign'd them. *He gave Authority to his Servants, and to every Man his* (proper) *Work, and commanded the Porter* (or Door-keeper) *to watch.* Every Man has *Authority* or Right to do his Duty. And as ſome are appointed to ſerve the Houſhold in a *particular manner*, (*e. g.* to declare to others the *Will* of their LORD, *teaching Men to do whatſoever he hath commanded them*) they have Authority to diſcharge that *particular Truſt*. And when they do this according to *his Will*, they may be ſaid to *repreſent his Authority*, and they ought to be heard. Thus the *Porter* is commanded to *watch*, leſt any ſhould, without due Warning given, leave, or neglect their proper Work, and leſt *Thieves* or *Seducers* ſhould enter in to ſpoil and to deceive. Accordingly the *Apoſtle* charges the *Elders* of the Church of *Epheſus*, *Take heed to your ſelves, and to all the Flock—For I know this, that after my departing ſhall grievous Wolves enter in among you, not ſparing the Flock: Alſo of your own ſelves ſhall Men ariſe, ſpeaking perverſe Things, to draw away Diſciples after them: Therefore watch*, &c. The ſame Perſons are called *Overſeers*, and *Stewards*, and their ſpecial Work is *to feed the Church of God, which he has purchaſed with his own Blood*, or *to give the Houſhold their Portion of Meat in due Seaſon.* They are *commanded*, and therefore have *Authority* to do theſe Things. It is the MASTER's Will that there ſhould be ſuch *Stewards* in his Houſe even till he come. And to prevent Confuſion, he has ſettled a Method for the orderly *Continuance* of them, declared *what manner of Perſons* they ought to be, appointed *their Services*, and fixed the *Regards* due unto them. And in ſo doing he may be

Acts xx. 28, 29, 30, 31.

Luke xii. 42.

ſaid

ſaid to *give Authority to his Servants*, that is to authoriſe them to perform ſuch and ſuch commanded Duties, as to *feed the Houſhold*, and to *give them their Meat in due Seaſon*. But then it may as truly, and without any Impropriety of Speech, be ſaid, that the *Houſhold* have *Authority to eat*. They are commanded to ſeek and *labour for that Meat which periſheth not*. And if any pretended *Stewards* ſhall withhold from *them* their *ſpiritual Food*, or adulterate it with baſe and hurtful Mixtures, they are not obliged to own ſuch Stewards, or ſubmit unto them; their *Allegiance* being due, not to their *Stewards*, but to their *Lord* and *Maſter*, whoſe *ſole Command* is the only *Authority* to be admitted of in his Houſe.

So that whatever diſtinguiſhing *Characters* or *Offices* ſome may bear in the Church of *Chriſt*, all are equally *Servants* to him, and *equally* exempted from every *other Dominion*, in Things peculiarly belonging to his Empire over them. If we conſider the Members of his Church in their *natural* or *civil* Capacities and Relations, they are, or may be ſubject to *others*, according to the Degrees of their *natural* or *political* Authority: But as Members of *Chriſt's* Church, and in the Concerns of *his Houſe*, which are purely ſpiritual, and interfere not with the Policies of this World, they are not *put in ſubjection to Angels or Men*, nor owe *Fealty* to any but to *Him* who is the *ſupreme* and *only* LORD of their Conſciences. The very *Apoſtles*, who of all Men had the moſt immediate Authority from CHRIST, were to teach or ordain nothing but *what they receiv'd of the Lord*, and in declaring his Meſſage, they were not allowed to affect any *Domination* (far leſs to exerciſe any *temporal Juriſdiction*) but with all Long-Suffering and Condeſcenſion to apply themſelves to the Service of the Church for *Jeſus ſake*.

Heb. ii. 5.

THE

THE principal *Diſtinction* to be obſerv'd in the *Houſe of* GOD, and to which the Rule of *Judgment* will be applied at the laſt Day, is that of *good* and *evil Servants*. All that *name the Name of Chriſt*, or are admitted into the Church by *Baptiſm*, and profeſs to own him, are his Servants, and *federally* engaged to be faithful to him. The ſame Commands are given to all, and the ſame Duties requir'd of them. But *in a great Houſe*, ſuch as the Church is, *there are not only Veſſels of Gold and of Silver, but alſo of Wood, and of Earth.* Some are *faithleſs* Servants, and yield but a partial *ſervile* Compliance, and deſign themſelves in all that they do. They perform no Obedience from a genuine Principle. They are void of *Faith*, and of *Charity*, and ſo are *nothing*; nor do they regard the Glory of their LORD, but will *deny* Him, and his *Truth*, rather than mortify their Luſts, or renounce the World. Others are *ſanctified, and meet for the Maſter's Uſe*, ſerviceable to his Intereſts *and prepared unto every good Work.* They *watch, and ſtand faſt in the Faith.* They perform the Obedience of *Servants*, with the Love, Delight, and Integrity of Friends: They *deny themſelves*, deſign the Honour of their *Maſter* in all that they do, and his Glory is dearer to them than their Lives.

2 Tim. ii. 20, 21.

1 Cor. xvi. 13.

IT may be ſometimes difficult to diſtinguiſh between *Theſe* in this World, that is full of Guile; but a Day of Judgment will make them manifeſt. For as all who profeſs Subjection to the Laws and Government of CHRIST, are his (reputed) Servants, ſo they are *accountable* to his Tribunal, and muſt paſs under his Examination. And as every *Perſon*, ſo *every Work ſhall be brought into Judgment, with every ſecret Thing, whether it be Good or Evil.* The *faithful*

Servants of the LORD, who were *ſtedfaſt* and *unmov'd* in his Service, ſhall be greatly rewarded in that Day: But thoſe perfidious Servants who, under a Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, were ſecret Enemies to his Government, or thoſe, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, who *reject*, or *apoſtatize* from the Faith; and thoſe *Wolves* of Prey, who, to compel Men to yield to their Uſurpations, and comply with their Luſts, ſhall, *with the Fiſt of Wickedneſs, ſmite their fellow Servants*, whilſt they themſelves *eat and drink with the Drunken*, ſhall *be puniſhed with an everlaſting Deſtruction from the Preſence of the Lord, and the Glory of his Power.*

II. *Secondly*, I am to conſider the *Duty* enjoin'd in the Text. *What I ſay unto you, I ſay unto all, Watch.*

And,

I. As this *Charge* has *expreſs* Relation to a *future State*, and *Judgment*; a firm *Perſuaſion of ſuch a State, and Expectation of* CHRIST's *coming to judge the World*, according to the *Faith of the Goſpel*, muſt belong to this Duty, and is indeed the Life and Soul of it.

THIS is a principal Article of our Religion, and much inſiſted on in the Writings of the *Apoſtles*. It was the firſt Thing revealed to them by the Miniſtry of *Angels* immediately upon *Chriſt's* Aſcenſion. Nor did they fail to declare it to others, but always made uſe of it as the moſt powerful Argument to lead Men to Repentance. The Belief of this is the governing Principle of a Chriſtian's Life,

Act. i. 11.

Ch. iii. 19, 21. and Ch. xvii. 30, 31.

Life, by which he is impulſed with a vigorous Affection, and generous Courage to preſs towards the Enjoyment of the eternal Reward, and ſpare neither Pains, nor Watching, nor Labour to obtain it. *For our Converſation is in Heaven, from whence alſo we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; who ſhall change our vile Body, that it may be faſhion'd like unto his glorious Body, according to the working whereby he is able even to ſubdue all things unto himſelf.* Our bleſſed LORD, after he had finiſh'd the Work of our Redemption, retir'd to the Father, to intercede in the holy Place, and plead the Merit of his Atonement, as our *High Prieſt*, before the Tribunal of GOD. There he is exalted to higheſt Glory and Power, as King and Judge of the World. But he has promiſed a Return. And his Subjects are commanded to expect him. And that *with all the Thunders of his Father's Power* to cruſh his Enemies to pieces, but for the Salvation, and Remuneration of his faithful Servants. This then we muſt always keep in Mind. It muſt poſſeſs our Thoughts Day and Night. Nor is it a general Notion of it that is intended, but that our Principles, our Affections, and Actions be under the Direction of ſuch an Hope.

Phil. iii. 20, 21.

2 Theſſ. i. 7, 8. Mat. xxv. 34.

It is too obvious from the Lives of Men, and the leading *Ends* they ſeem to propoſe to themſelves, that the generality are deſtitute of *this Hope*. A Notion of it they may have in the *Theory*, but a prevailing Perſuaſion, and firm Expectation they are void of. If they had the full *Evidence of Faith*, by which we are confirm'd in the Truth of Things *future* and *inviſible*, that there ſhall be one Day, a ſtrict and impartial Examination and Judgment of them, and all their Actions, and that *great* and *eternal*

Rewards or *Puniſhments*, ſhall follow this Judgment, would they not *break off their Sins by Repentance*, and prepare for that unavoidable Inquiſition? Would they not provide for the terrible Day, and be ready to meet the LORD? A Proſpect of this powerfully impreſt upon Conſcience, would awaken the moſt ſecure, and penetrate into the Breaſts of the moſt obdurate Sinners.

To Believers eſpecially, this is uſeful, as having an immediate Influence upon their *Duties* and *Comforts*. The Thoughts of his coming may be a Terror to the Ungodly, and bind up under Guilt and Wrath the Heart of Impenitence. The Aſſurance given of it ought to be unto all Men a Reſtraint from Sin, becauſe every Man ought to be influenced by Goſpel Motives, among which *the Terrors of the Lord* are mention'd. But with Reſpect to ſincere Chriſtians, who *live by Faith*, the Expectation of his coming augments their Joy, and eſtabliſhes their Aſſurance of eternal Life. For, as He aſcended into Heaven for their Benefit, to *appear in the Preſence of God, and prepare Manſions for them*, ſo *he will come again to receive them unto himſelf, that where he is, there they may be alſo.* He will come not only as *Lord of Lords*, before whom all the *Potentates* of the Earth, who think themſelves exempted from Laws and Judgments, ſhall be as the *meaneſt Slave*; but as the *King of Saints*, to advance every Citizen of the *new Jeruſalem* to a Crown of Glory. So that whatever Promiſe of *good Things to come* the Goſpel contains, whatever Argument can be drawn from Scripture to confirm our Hope, or encreaſe our Joy, we may make uſe of them all in reference to *that Day*; till which our compleat Reward, and the Perfection of our entire Nature is reſerv'd. Let us there-

Joh. xiv. 2, 3. ch. xvii. 24.

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fore *love his Appearing*, which ſeems to be the Deſire of the *whole Creation*, groaning under the Burden of Sin and Vanity; and aſſuredly is ſo of the nobleſt and beſt part of it, which they expreſs in frequent Thoughts, and fervent Wiſhes that he would haſten his coming, and fit them for it. Rom. viii. 19, &c.

But theſe Deſires and Expectations cannot *ſubſiſt*, or have any *Efficacy* in Life, unleſs we ſtedfaſtly believe the *Immortality* of the Soul, and its entering *immediately* at *Death* on a State of *poſitive Happineſs*, or *real Miſery*. This is flatly denied by ſome who would not be thought abſolute *Infidels* as to a *future State*, who profeſs the Hope of eternal Life to commence at the Reſurrection; but that through that long Duration between Death and the Reſurrection, the *Soul* as well as the Body is abſolutely *dead*, without Thought, Life, Reflection or Senſation, in a State of total Darkneſs and Inactivity, like the Corps lodg'd in the ſilent Grave. Diſconſolate Thought! But whatever theſe Men pretend to believe of *a Life to come, and a Day of Judgment*, their Doctrine is, in reality, pernicious to the *Chriſtian Hope*, and blunts the Edge of all Arguments and Motives drawn from a future State to inforce Religion. They may talk of a *Reviviſcency* of *Soul* and *Body* at the laſt Day, but once they ſuppreſs or overcome all Conſciouſneſs of *Immortality*, they naturally and eaſily loſe all Sight and Senſe of *another World*: And either turn all that is ſaid concerning it in Scripture, into mere *Allegory*, or look upon the Notion itſelf as the Reſult of human Policy, to keep Mankind in awe. And then the Song of the *Epicure* paſſes for ſtrong Reaſoning, *let us eat and drink for to morrow we die*. Briefly, the *Perſuaſion* of a future State of Rewards and Puniſhments, and the *Belief* of the Immortality of the Soul muſt ſtand or fall together.

WHAT firm Hope can he have of a *Reſurrection*, or a Day of *Retribution*, who believes with the *Socinians*, or their more modern Diſciples, that the *Soul* neither *is*, nor *lives*, nor *underſtands* after the Diſſolution of the Body? Will it be ſaid that he believes the *Reſurrection*, &c. becauſe GOD hath ſaid, *that the Dead ſhall be raiſed*, and he is as able to *revive* or new-make the *Soul*, though it utterly periſh at Death, or ſinks into an *abſolute Inſenſibility*, as to quicken and raiſe the *Body*, after it hath been ſo long corrupted and blended into a thouſand Forms? I anſwer, that the *Immortality* of the Soul, and its *Permanency* after Death, is as clearly revealed in Scripture, as the *Reſurrection*, &c. That this *laſt*, being a Matter of pure Revelation, not deduc'd from any certain Principles of *natural Reaſon*, (though that falls in with it being revealed) is much more liable to be diſputed, or figuratively interpreted, than the *former*, which is not only founded on the Authority of *Scripture*, but eſtabliſh'd by the *Light* of *Nature*, being, as *Tully* calls it, the *Voice of Nature*. So that if Men can reſiſt the Evidence of *Reaſon* and *Scripture* in the *one Caſe*, it is not likely they will be much influenc'd by the bare Authority of *Revelation* in the *other*. When Men become ſo inſenſible of their divine Original, *after the Image of the living* GOD, as to put themſelves at Death upon a Level with *Brutes*; once they obliterate all the Characters of *Immortality* engraven upon their Souls by the *Father of Spirits*, and harden themſelves againſt Conviction of the perpetual Duration of the *intelligent Spirit* in Man, from the Teſtimony of Scripture, from all the Phænomena both of *natural* and *revealed Religion*, and the different *Attributes* of *Matter* and *Spirit*, they will not be much mov'd by any Thoughts or Suſpicion of a *Reſtitution* of *Being*, long after Death.

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THIS is farther evident from the very Principles of thoſe who contend for the Mortality of the Soul, or its *ceaſing to be* at Death. For though in Words they own a *Reſurrection*, and a *general Judgment*, yet they ſo ſtate the Matter, as in effect to rob the Righteous of all Hope of *future Good*, and to ſtrengthen the Wicked againſt all Fear of *future Evil*. For in the *firſt* Place, they deny that the *Wicked* ſhall be rais'd at all, or, if they are, that they ſhall ſubſiſt in a State of *endleſs Miſery*, interpreting all that is threaten'd in Scripture againſt the *Unbelieving* and *Diſobedient*, to ſignify only a *Deprivation* of all *Senſe* and *Being*; which is ſo far from being an *Evil* dreaded by them, that, conſcious of their moral Diſſimilitude to GOD, it is their *Deſire* and *Choice*. Hence a late Writer in a *weekly Paper*, ſtudied to unhinge the Minds of Men from all fix'd Principles in Religion, banters it as an Abſurdity ridiculous to Reaſon, that *eternal Death* ſhould ſignify *eternal Life in Torment*. And *then* as to the *Righteous*, they allow only of a *vicarious* Reſurrection, a Reſurrection not of thoſe *very Bodies* in which they liv'd on Earth, or were laid in the Grave, but of *ſomething elſe* in their ſtead. And what is this, but, in the Conſequence of it, to impoſe that upon us as a *Truth*, which the Apoſtle rejects with Abhorrence, that *they which are fallen aſleep in Chriſt are periſhed?* Their *Souls* are extinct, or reduc'd to *nothing*, and their *other Half* ſhall never be reſcu'd from the Grave. And can a Perſon be of this Mind, and at the ſame Time diſcern any Force or Senſe in that Exhortation, *Be Followers of them who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promiſes?* Seeing he cannot but conclude, that there are no Promiſes to be inherited after this Life, or not by thoſe individual

1 Cor. xv. 18.

Heb. iv. &c.

Perſons who live a Life of *Faith* and *Patience* here on Earth.

I HAVE been the longer on this Reflection becauſe of the Importance of the Thing, as with which, I apprehend, all efficacious *Belief* of Chriſt's coming to *Judgment*, and all Engagements from it to holy *watching*, muſt ſtand or fall. Even a *Heathen* Moraliſt, by the mere force of his Underſtanding, could ſay, that no Man can be *firmly Religious*, unleſs he believes the Immortality of the Soul, and act from a Senſe of it. What other Conſideration can be powerful enough to make him ſtedfaſtly adhere to GOD, and his *Truth* however made known, againſt all the Terrors and Blandiſhments of a contradicting World, and innumerable Temptations ſuited to captivate all the Avenues to his Soul? When this *rational Perſuaſion* is heighten'd into the Aſſurance of a *Divine Faith*, founded on the Declarations of Scripture, and Deſigns of redeeming Love, it makes the Believer *ſtedfaſt and unmov'd, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, for as much as he knows his Labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord.* Whereas the diſmal horrid Thought of the Soul's Extinction, or its vaniſhing into *ſenſleſs Air*, upon the breaking down of this material Fabrick, muſt in the Nature of Things, wherever it is embrac'd, annihilate all Sentiments of true Piety and Religion. 'Tis the Bane of all that's truly good and virtuous, and at the ſame Time leaves no other Reſtraint than the Fear of Man againſt all the Luſt and Violence that human Nature in its utmoſt Degeneracy is capable of.

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* Βιβλίων ἀποστερῆς. *Plato de Legib.*

II. As *Watching* is here oppos'd to carnal *Security* and *Sloth*, ſignify'd by *Sleeping*, it muſt import the whole *Activity* of the Soul in the *right Improvement of preſent Time*, for attaining the *great Ends of Life*: with a reſolute unwearied *ſtriving againſt Sin*, and all its *Auxiliaries*; and *improving in thoſe Graces and Virtues*, that are the ſupreme Excellencies of our rational Beings.

(1.) *A wakeful* Poſture, *Circumſpection*, and *Redemption of Time*, for attaining the *main Ends of Life*, are of the Eſſence of *Watching*. To this Purpoſe is the Exhortation of St. *Paul*. *Awake thou that ſleepeſt,—— ſee that ye walk circumſpectly, not as Fools, but as wiſe, redeeming the Time.* This Warning to *awake* from *Sleep* is not an Addreſs to the *Dead*, or the *Souls* in *Hades*, as ſome have dream'd, but to *living Men*, who are repreſented as *aſleep in Sin*, having their Senſes ſo lockt up that they cannot diſtinguiſh between Good and Evil, or paſs a right Judgment on Things, and though inviron'd with Danger apprehend it not. And this is the Caſe of many who are provident and active in ſecuring the Intereſts of the preſent Life. Were they ſo *awake* as to be ſenſible of their *ſpiritual State*, and moſt *important Intereſts*, ſo as to make true Compariſons between the Enjoyments of this World, and the next, the Concerns of a mortal Body that muſt quickly be reſolv'd into *its Duſt*, and of the vital intelligent Spirit which is of a *Divine Original*, and can only be ſatisfied with the Poſſeſſion of the bleſſed God, whoſe Image it is; they could never *neglect the great Salvation*, be indolent and careleſs in Things of a ſpiritual Nature, indulge themſelves in *Works of Darkneſs* that ſtupify the Conſcience, nor employ all their Time, their Thoughts, Pains, and Paſſions, about Things that periſh in the

Eph. v. 14. 18.

uſe of them, that now interpoſe between them and *Heaven*, and threaten to exclude them for ever from it.

THOSE who are enlighten'd and enliven'd by *Chriſt* from the *Sleep* and *Death* of Sin, conſider and judge that they were made and redeem'd for GOD, and the endleſs Glories of another World: That on this Earth they are *Pilgrims* and *Strangers*; that Heaven is their *Home*, and the Happineſs thereof their *chiefeſt End*: And that therefore they ought to live, as improving the preſent Life and Time for Eternity. They know that they are entruſted with a Charge of the greateſt Importance, the Glory of GOD, and their own Salvation: That in keeping this Charge, they muſt combat *with Fleſh* and *Blood*, and with the *Powers of Darkneſs*; that *this World* is as the Shadow of Death, full of Deluſions, Snares, and Terrors which obſtruct the Exerciſe of a ſpiritual Life; and that *fleſhly Luſts* are in perpetual *War againſt the Soul*. In this Situation, they dare not *Sleep* as do others, but keep their Poſts with Care and *Watchfulneſs*, *redeeming the Time becauſe the Days are Evil*. They *watch* for Opportunities of doing Good, the moſt ſeaſonable Good, and in the beſt Manner. They are willingly employ'd in the great and neceſſary Duties of Religion, and can ſacrifice their Sleep, their Health, and Strength, even their Lives to the Glory of their LORD, and the Neceſſities of his Church. They are circumſpect and *vigilant* in ſecuring their *ſpiritual Intereſts*, as the *Children of this World* are in making Proviſion for this Life, and guard againſt Impediments and Oppoſitions in their Way to Heaven, *caſting off every evil Weight, that they may run with Patience the Race that is ſet before them*. Such is the habitual Temper of every faithful Servant of *Chriſt*, this is what they *would be*, and labour to be, and theſe the

Things they propoſe to themſelves as the great Ends of Life.

(2.) To this alſo belongs a reſolute unwearied *ſtriving againſt Sin*, and all its Auxiliaries, till they obtain the Maſtery. Our State here is militant. We are to fight under the *Captain of our Salvation*, in that Warfare which is proper to his Kingdom. The end of this Conteſt is the Deſtruction of the whole *Body of Sin*. The Oppoſition is to *Satan*, the *Fleſh*, or ſinful Corruption, and the *evil World*. Theſe hoſtile Powers we muſt never be at Amity with, for *their Friendſhip is Enmity to God*. Jam. iv. 4. We renounce them in our Covenant of *Baptiſm*, and all *regenerate* Perſons have receiv'd a Principle and Spirit againſt them, which in the End will be victorious, whatever the intermediate Events may ſometimes be. This then is a part of our *Vigilance*, we muſt ſtrive againſt Sin, and reſiſt it even unto Death. We muſt not ſpare this *Amalakite*, but *cut it in ſunder* as *Samuel* did *Agag* the Enemy of God's People, and as was wont to be done in the *Eaſt*, to ſuch as *blaſphemed* God, or were *Rebels* and *Traitors* to their Country, and as *Chriſt* threatens ſhall be done in the Day of Judgment, to *ſlothful* and *wicked* Servants. The Day we league with this *Enemy*, devoted to Deſtruction, we violate our Fidelity to our Lord, who *came to ſave us from our Sins*, to *deliver us from this preſent evil World*, and from the *Power of Satan*; *but if we through the Spirit do mortify the Body of Sin, we ſhall live unto God.*

And to this End we muſt exerciſe ourſelves in daily *Penitence*, for which we ſeem to have been born; we muſt be much in *Meditation*, and abſtracted from the *Engagements* of this World, which uſually lull Men *aſleep*, and inſpire them with deluding

Dreams of a Happineſs here. We muſt reſtrain the Exorbitancies of our *Paſſions* and *Appe-*
Luk. xxi. 34. *tites*, and deny their Requeſts. *Take heed to yourſelves, leſt at any time your Hearts be overcharged with Surfeiting, and Drunkenneſs, and Cares of this Life.* Eſpecially, we muſt be *conſtant* and *fervent* in *Prayer*. This, as well as *Sobriety*, is join'd with *Watching*, as a Species of it, and as a neceſſary Preparatory to it in all
Luk. xxi. 36. other Reſpects, *Watch ye therefore, and pray always.* Or as in the *Chapter* of my Text, *Take ye heed, watch, and pray.* Without this we can never be diſpos'd for any Thing that is truly Good, nor fortified againſt the Impreſſions of Evil. When we have labour'd with the utmoſt Care and Diligence, with all the Force of our Underſtanding and Will, we muſt own the Neceſſity of *ſupernatural Grace*. And we cannot reverence the Grace of God unleſs we *pray* for it, with the moſt devout Acknowledgments of his Goodneſs, and moſt affectionate Engagement of our Souls to him. *Knowing*, ſaith the *Apoſtle, that you have a Maſter in Heaven*, from whom you expect a Reward hereafter, and preſent Direction and Aſſiſtance in your Services, *continue* inſtant *in Prayer, and watch in the ſame with Thanksgiving.* Nor will he with-
Mat. vii. 7, 8. hold his *good Spirit* from thoſe who duly ask his ſupernatural Aids, with a deep Senſe of their own Inſufficiency, and humble Dependance on his Mercy through the *Merits* of a *Redeemer*. And as in this Way divine Concourſe is procur'd to perform Duties aright, ſo by the ſame Means we obtain Deliverance from
Mat. xxvi. 41. Evil. *Watch, and pray, that ye enter not into Temptation.* This is our beſt Defence againſt all Adverſaries. This Weapon of our Warfare will inſpire us with Reſolution to *withſtand in the evil Day*, and teach us how to manage

aright that *Sword of the Spirit, the Word of* GOD, which is mighty to demoliſh *the ſtrong Holds of Satan.* By *praying always with all Prayer, and Supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with Perſeverance,* we ſhall obtain the beſt Bleſſings, ſurmount the greateſt Difficulties, and eſcape the moſt threatning Dangers. Eph. vi.

AFTER this manner it is we muſt *ſtrive againſt Sin* till it is aboliſh'd, and carry on our Oppoſition to *Satan* and the *World,* till we are out of the reach of their Enmity and Influence. 'Tis true, ſuch are our preſent Circumſtances that we cannot attain to a *compleat Conqueſt* over Sin in this Life. So deeply rooted it is in our entire Natures, and ſo univerſally ſpread over all our Faculties, that there muſt be a Diſſolution of our preſent Being to obtain an *abſolute Purity.* Which Conſideration ought to render *Death* not only tolerable to us, but even ſo far deſirable, as this ſide of it there is no perfect Freedom from Sin, nor perfect Conformity to the divine Holineſs. But this is ſo far from being a juſt Plea for thoſe who neglect to watch and ſtrive againſt Sin, that ſo much the ſtronger is the Reaſon, why we ſhould double our Care and Vigilance. The Imperfection of our preſent State, ſhould teach us *Humility,* and convince us of our total and perpetual Dependance on the *Grace* of GOD, which can make the *Weakeſt* ſtrong, and without *renewed Supplies* of which the *Strongeſt* may *fall,* but it can never be an Argument for *Pride* or *Security,* by which the moſt are ruin'd. He therefore, who does not bend all his Might to the utter Extirpation of Sin, and Victory over ſpiritual Enemies, according to the Rules of this holy War, who doth not ardently deſire, and aſſiduouſly endeavour to be *cleanſed from every Defilement of the Fleſh and Spirit,* and *to perfect Holineſs in*

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the Fear of God, cannot challenge the Character of a *wiſe* or *faithful* Servant of Christ.

(3.) If in theſe Things we are habitually employ'd, we ſhall gradually *grow* in thoſe *Graces* and Virtues that are the prime Excellencies of our intelligent Nature; and give *all Diligence to add to our Faith, Virtue; and to Virtue, Knowledge; and to Knowledge, Temperance; and to Temperance, Patience; and to Patience, Godlineſs; and to Godlineſs, brotherly Kindneſs; and to brotherly Kindneſs, Charity.* 2 Pet. i. 5,6,7. This is the Means of our Perſeverance. *If ye do theſe Things, ye ſhall never fall* into any crying Sins, incompatible with a State of Grace, and Favour with God. *For if theſe Things be in you and abound, they make you that ye ſhall neither be ſlothful* (οὐκ ἀργοὺς) *nor unfruitful in the Knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* But if ye grow *ſecure* and *careleſs*, if you ſlacken your *Diligence*, and ceaſe to improve in thoſe *holy Habitudes*, you are in Danger of being overcome of Evil, and of falling into grievous Offences, that will greatly provoke God, and cloud all comfortable Evidence of your *Calling and Election.* Ver. 10. Ver. 8.

Faith is the principal Weapon of holy *Watchers, the Shield that quenches the fiery Darts of the Wicked.* But this noble Grace is never alone. It is the Parent and Nurſe of thoſe other Virtues that make up the compleat Furniture of a Chriſtian. We muſt not break any Link in this Chain, or pretend to *Faith*, unleſs we are poſſeſſed of all the Sentiments of the *new Creature.* There muſt be an undaunted Courage, an invincible *Virtue* or Fortitude in profeſſing the Faith at all Hazards: An Improvement in divine *Knowledge*, unto *the full Aſſurance of Underſtanding in the Acknowledgment of the Myſtery of* God,

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even of the FATHER *and of* CHRIST. A Freedom and Abſtinence from all thoſe unlawful and *intemperate* Luſts, or Affections that cloud the Mind, that pervert the Judgment, and prejudice Men againſt a Life of Faith, or obſtruct their complying with reaſonable Obligations of Duty. There muſt be a *patient* Willingneſs to bear Afflictions, Reproaches, and Perſecutions for the ſake of Truth, and to *endure Hardneſs as faithful Soldiers of Chriſt*. The Fear and Love of God muſt be the prevailing Affections in the Soul, diſpoſing the whole Man to all the Exerciſes of GODLINESS, with a ſincere Deſignation of our Beings and Actions to the Glory of GOD, and a ſacred Regard to his revealed Will as our Rule. Such a Propenſity and Conformity of the Heart unto GOD, will naturally produce a pure and fervent Affection and *brotherly Kindneſs* to all thoſe who profeſs the ſame Faith, and appear to be Members of the ſame myſtical Body with ourſelves.

Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him alſo that is begotten of him. 1 Joh. v. 1.

Nor muſt our Good-Will be confin'd to theſe. The *Charity* of a Chriſtian has the whole human Race for its Object. It wiſhes that ALL MEN were under the ſame Government of CHRIST, enjoy'd the ſame Privileges, and were entitled to the ſame Promiſes, and Rewards. Its very Enemies are the Objects of its Interceſſions. And its Property is to *do good to* ALL, *eſpecially to the Houſhold of Faith*. That *Faith* therefore which can exiſt without *Charity* is as great a Soleciſm in Religion, as that *Charity* which is void of *Faith*. But theſe Graces muſt be evident in their Effects. Our great Lawgiver is ſaid to have *appointed to every Man his Work*. He hath order'd every part of their Conduct by the moſt excellent Laws, and Conſtitutions, which reach to all Ranks of Men, in all Circumſtances of Life, and require ſomething

to

to be done by them, that directly terminates either on GOD, *Themſelves*, or *Others*, according to the ſeveral Relations in which Men ſtand to one another. Nor can we be ſaid to *watch* as thoſe *that wait for the coming of the Lord*, unleſs we labour in all theſe Inſtances to have *a Conſcience void of Offence towards God, and towards Men.*

III. THE *Watching* here enjoin'd is in order to, and carries in the Nature of it, *a Readineſs to leave this World, and appear before the Tribunal of* GOD.

So our bleſſed LORD explains his own Words. What he calls *Watching* in one Place, Mat. xxiv. 42. *Watch therefore, for ye know not in what Hour your Lord doth come*, is, in the Reddition of the ſame Charge, called *Readineſs: Therefore be ye alſo ready, for in ſuch* Ver. 44. *an Hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.* The Word * imports *habitual* and *actual* Readineſs; not only that we be habitually *fit* and *capable*, but that we be in a *prompt Readineſs.* It carries in it the Idea of a *willing cheerful Propenſity* to a certain Action, or a certain End. Accordingly there is an habitual and actual Preparation for another World. The *former* conſiſts in the Safety of a Man's ſpiritual State; and the *latter* in the lively Exerciſe of thoſe Graces that render Men habitually fit to die, with a *conſcious Readineſs*, or *confident Willingneſs* to leave *this World*, and go to *another* at the Will of GOD. In this manner it becomes us to be prepared and ready, improving every Day as if it were the laſt allotted to us. It is one of the moſt neceſſary Affairs of Life to be much

* ἕτοιμοι.

in

in the View and Proſpects of Death, frequently to meditate on the Joys and Terrors of another World: To contemplate with an awful Silence, the Blackneſs, Darkneſs, and Horrors of the Place of the damn'd, and to reaſcend with willing Thoughts to the ſublime Regions of Light, where the bleſſed GOD is ſeen, poſſeſs'd, reſembled. Were Men thus employ'd, how would they *watch*, and *pray*, and labour to be *ready* at the ſhorteſt Summons? How ſtudiouſly would they avoid every deliberate Sin, that would ſtain the Conſcience, and render it unmeet for Communion with GOD? How diligently would they uſe every *Gift* and *Talent* they have receiv'd from the LORD, and receiv'd unto this End, that they might improve them to his Glory, their Souls Welfare, and the Profit of others? I ſhall give ſome farther Account of this *Readineſs*.

MAN was not originally made for Death; but *Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin, and ſo Death paſſed upon all Men, for that all have ſinned.* Rom. v. 12. So that *Death is the Wages of Sin*, and *Sin is the Sting of Death*, 1 Cor. xv. 56. which gives the dreadful Character of *eternal* to it. Its killing Power ariſes from the *Contrariety* there is in Sin, to the holy Nature of GOD, and from the *judicial Sentence* of his Law. Hence it follows that Men are *naturally* unprepared for Death, becauſe they are *naturally* under the *Guilt* and *Power* of Sin, and under the Sentence or *Curſe of the Law*; all which muſt be remov'd, and the Sinner *juſtified* or abſolv'd from the Guilt of Sin, and reſcued from its *reigning Power*, and exempted from the *Sentence* of the Law, (which can be done by none but GOD, the *Judge of all*,) otherwiſe he is not *prepared* or *fit* to die, in any other Senſe than a condemn'd Malefactor may be ſaid to be fit to undergo the juſt Puniſhment of his Crimes.

Now, there is no other Way appointed of God in which we can attain to this *juſtified State*, but by *Faith* in *Chriſt*, and his *Blood*, as ſhed for the *Propitiation* and *Remiſſion* of Sins. Men may flatter themſelves with an imaginary Safety upon other Terms, or in a Way different from this, but there is no other Way of Salvation revealed in the Goſpel. To be abſolv'd from Sin, and entitled to the Bleſſings of the *New Covenant*, a Man muſt *truſt in* Christ, plead his Death and Satisfaction, renounce all Dependance on any ſuppos'd or real *Righteouſneſs* of his own, or any Duties perform'd by him in Obedience to the Law, be, as it were, wholly tranſplanted into Christ, willing to be *juſtified* through *his Righteouſneſs* only, and to live by his Grace. And as this is the only Way to be reſtor'd to the Favour of God, ſo no other Way will render our Services acceptable to him. Whatever Men do whilſt they are *Enemies* to this Way of Grace, however it may pacify their own Conſciences, it can never be pleaſing to God. But this Foundation being once laid, Obedience is placed on a ſure Bottom. By this we do not make *void the Law*, nor deprive it of its *binding Force* upon Conſcience as a *Rule* of Life. For though we are juſtified only through the *Righteouſneſs* of Christ, and his Death or Satisfaction is the only meritorious Cauſe of our Pardon and Salvation, yet we are not actual Partakers of this Benefit, without actual Faith in Christ, and *Repentance from dead Works*, which are the Principles of our *Renovation* into the *Image* of God, by which we are diſpos'd and enabled *to die unto Sin, and live unto Righteouſneſs*. So that all Perſons *juſtified through the Redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt*, are alſo *regenerated, converted* to God, and *ſanctified* by his Spirit. When God pardons our Sins, he *ſoftens* and *purifies* our

our Hearts. And though this *Abſolution* may be truly ſaid to go before that *continued Sanctification*, by which we are *kept* in a *State* of *Grace*, and *Favour* with GOD, yet it cannot, in order of Time, be ſaid to go before that *effectual Operation* of the divine *Spirit*, by which Faith is planted in the Heart, and we become *New Creatures*.

WHEN we are in ſuch a State, we are *habitually prepared* for Death, let it come in what Shape, and in what Time God pleaſes. *For there is no Condemnation to them which are thus united to* CHRIST *by Faith, who walk not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit.* Rom. viii. 1.

BUT if we conceive of a *prompt Readineſs* in Diſtinction to an *habitual Meetneſs*, then the Servant of CHRIST is *prepared* to die, when he has anſwered the Ends of Life, diſcharg'd faithfully his Work, or *finiſhed his Courſe with Joy*, and ordered his Affairs as becomes one leaving this World to *appear before the Judgment Seat* of CHRIST; and when, with a due Improvement of preſent Time, yet, weary of the Fleſh and of the World, the Infirmities of Nature, the Afflictions and Temptations of this Life, and Toils of a ſpiritual Warfare, he is *willing to depart*, or is filled with a holy Ardor of Soul, aſpiring after the *Perfection of the Juſt*, who enjoy the Beatifick Viſion. The Soul thus favoured of Heaven may triumph in the Spirit and Words of St. *Paul, O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory? The Sting of Death is Sin, and the Strength of Sin is the Law; but Thanks be to* GOD *who giveth us the Victory through* the Death and Reſurrection of *Jeſus Chriſt our* LORD.

THUS I have conſider'd the *Duty* enjoined in my Text, as it concerns all thoſe who would be approv-

ed of their LORD, at his coming. Diverſe other Things might be added, and the Charge to *watch* farther opened, as it particularly relates to *Miniſters* of the Goſpel, who are *Guides* and *Watchmen* to others. But our Time is limited; and as I am diſcourſing to a popular Auditory, it is not neceſſary, at preſent, to conſider this Duty in any other View than as it equally relates to all Chriſtians: Eſpecially, ſince what we have yet to offer on the *mournful Occaſion* of this Diſcourſe, may ſerve as a Repreſentation of what our common LORD requires ſhould be done by *thoſe* who are entruſted with ſo ſacred a *Miniſtry* in his *Houſe*, as that of *watching* over any part of his *Flock*.

I therefore proceed,

III. *Thirdly*, To ſpeak ſomething of the *Reaſons* that enforce the *Charge* now before us, and which render our Compliance with it neceſſary.

And here,

I. THE *Text itſelf* preſents us with an *Argument* irrecuſable with Chriſtians, the *Command* of CHRIST. *I ſay unto you all, Watch.* The Precept is repeated above twenty Times in the New Teſtament. And is there no Force in this Argument? Doth not the *Command* of CHRIST render our Obedience neceſſary? And is it not Reſpect to a *Command* that gives the Name of *Obedience* to any Thing we do? Then are we the *Diſciples* and *Friends* of CHRIST, when we *do whatſoever he hath commanded*, and with a conſcious Regard to *his Authority*.

THERE have been ſome who would enervate the binding Force of all divine *Commands* as applied to Believers in CHRIST, pretending that their Obedi-

ence was a *free-will Offering* of *Gratitude*, without any Obligation from the Law of GOD. But this is, in the Conſequence of it, (whatever they might apprehend) to renounce Obedience to him who is LORD, and *Judge* of all. As God rejects that from having any Place in his Service which is merely reſolv'd into the *Doctrines* and *Precepts* of Men, without any clear Warrant from Scripture; ſo, for Men to pretend to any *other Ground* of their Obedience, by whatever Name they may call it, that is *excluſive* of immediate Reſpect to the *Command* of GOD, as ſpirited with his *Authority*, is in effect to make their own *Propenſities*, or *Wills* their Rule.

THERE are others who talk much of Obedience to the Precepts of Chriſt, who will not yet own him as the *ſupreme* LORD of their Faculties, or include in their Obedience a real *Subjection* of their Souls and Conſciences unto his *immediate Authority*, as that *one Lawgiver who is able to ſave and to deſtroy*. But this is to rob Chriſt of all Obedience and Subjection unto him. Upon this *Scheme* Men can have no other View to his *Power* or *Authority* than the *Jews* had to *that* of *Moſes*, in ſubmitting to his Inſtitutions. They may indeed imagine him inveſted with a *higher Degree* of *ſubordinate Authority*, as his Capacities are larger, or to be appointed to promulge the Laws of GOD to a greater Number of Subjects, or, as one expreſſes it, to be a GOD to this *whole Syſtem*: But all this makes no eſſential Difference between *Him* and *Moſes*, (who alſo was *made a God*,) as to the Kind of their Authority. The Law promulged by him is not *abſolutely his*, nor receives its binding Authority from him, but from his *Principal*. Nor are the Subjects to whom theſe Laws are given, *his Subjects* in an abſolute Senſe, but the Subjects of *another*, to whom *he*

Gen. vii. 1. Ch. iv. 16.

and

and *they* are equally ſubject. And in yielding Obedience to theſe Laws it is not *his ſole Authority* that directly binds their Conſciences, but the Authority of a *higher Power*, whoſe *Subſtitute* he is. The Evidences of his *divine Commiſſion* may indeed oblige them, to receive as the Laws of God, whatever he declares to be ſuch; and the ſame Obligation lay upon the *Iſraelites* with Reſpect to *Moſes*, when *the Tribes were gathered together, and he commanded them a Law.* But then they obey him in no other Senſe than *theſe* obeyed *Moſes*; that is, they really yield no Obedience to *him*, but to the Authority of GOD the *Father* by which he acted. Such only are the religious Regards, which ſome, who would be eſteem'd the Refiners of our Faith, think proper to be paid to our bleſſed LORD. And yet, which is ſtrange, thoſe very Perſons, who would thus diveſt him of all *abſolute* and *underived Authority* in himſelf, do on other Occaſions, and to ſerve other Purpoſes, pretend to be great Aſſertors of the *ſole Authority of Chriſt in his Church.*

Deut. xxxiii. 4, 5.

BUT he challenges more than this from us; *that*, without any Limitation, *we honour him even as we honour the Father.* Which we can never do upon any truly rational or religious Principle, unleſs we believe him to be *one God with the Father.* He requires of us that we obey him as *our* LORD and *our* GOD, and that our Obedience be determin'd by his *abſolute Authority*, and unlimited Juriſdiction, as having in himſelf a Right to give Laws to the *Intellect*, the *Will*, and *Affections* which fall under his Cognizance, with a Power to protect, and reward the Obedient, and puniſh the Diſobedient eternally, according to his Will, which is the Rule of Righteouſneſs, and of Judgment. And if we do indeed thus *honour him*,

him, the Argument of his *Authority*, which, in the preſent Caſe, is indiſputable, will be of the greateſt Weight with us, and prompt us to a preſent and ready Compliance. Eſpecially conſidering that he has enjoin'd us to *watch*, not merely as an Inſtance of his *Authority*, but as the moſt proper Means to ſecure our own Happineſs.

II. ANOTHER Argument to enforce this Duty, is taken from our *not knowing the preciſe Time in which we muſt give an Account of ourſelves unto* GOD, which renders it extremely hazardous to neglect our Work, or give Way to Sloth. *Watch ye therefore, for ye know not when the Maſter of the Houſe cometh,——leſt coming ſuddenly he find you ſleeping.*

THE Argument is applicable to *Death* and *Judgment*. That we are mortal, and know not the Time of our Diſſolution, is what all Men know and confeſs: Yet there is nothing that the greateſt part of Men ſeem more to forget, or need more frequently to be put in Mind of. Though they ſee Death triumphing in all its Shapes, over Mankind, yet they are unwilling to believe, or to act as if they believ'd, that they themſelves are under its Power, and every Moment liable to its Arreſts. In like manner that God will *judge the World in Righteouſneſs*, is a Doctrine that ſeems to have been receiv'd in all Generations, and is ſo fully brought to light by the Goſpel, that he muſt at once be an *Atheiſt*, and an *Infidel*, who calls it into Queſtion. Yet how thoughtleſs are Men of that great Day of the Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God, which ſhall diſcloſe the Secrets of all Hearts! And therefore, the only wiſe God, who knoweth how to addreſs our Spirits in the moſt effectual manner, to awaken our ſleepy Powers, and rouſe up all the Affections of the Soul, frequently calls us to the Conſideration of our mortal

tal State, and the Changes that follow *Death* and *Judgment*.

(1.) He warns those who ſeem confident of *Futurities*, as if Life, and the Advantages of it depended on themſelves, that they *know not what ſhall be on the Morrow*, that *their Life is as a Vapour, that appeareth for a little Time, and then vaniſheth away*; that *their Times and Seaſons are not in their own Power, and that in an Hour in which they are not aware, their Souls may be required of them.* And can a more proper Argument be urg'd to keep us throughly *awake* to thoſe *Purpoſes and Intereſts* which are of the greateſt Value and Conſequence? Man's Life is in a perpetual Flux. He dies daily. *He cometh forth as a Flower and is cut down: He fleeth alſo as a Shadow, and continueth not. His Days are determin'd, and the Number of his Months* by an unknown irreverſible Decree. *His Bounds are appointed beyond which he cannot paſs. He accompliſheth as a Hireling his Days*, not knowing when the great Master will turn him off. And is not this an *awak'ning* Conſideration?

Jam. iv. 14.

Job xiv. &c.

The preſent Life is the only Time of *Trial* allotted unto Men. There is no *probationary State* in the World of Spirits. There *good Men* are free from all the Cares and Dangers of Warfare, and the *Wicked* out of all Capacities of doing any Thing that may be ſerviceable to their ſpiritual Welfare. Here only it is that Men *lay up Treaſures* for Eternity. In this World we are entruſted with *Talents* that are improvable unto the Glory of God, and our own greateſt *Good*. Death puts an End to this *improvable Truſt*. We are no longer *Stewards*. It is then too late to prepare for *Judgment*, for we ſhall be judged *according to what we have done in the Body, whether it be Good, or whether it be Evil*. If in this

Life

Life Men *neglect the great Salvation*; they are, in a ſeparate State, uncapable of any Benefit from *the Redemption that is in* CHRIST. The WORD *was made Fleſh*, and ſhed his *precious Blood* for *embodied* Souls; and it may as reaſonably be expected that *Apoſtate Angels* ſhould be redeemable by him, as thoſe *naked Spirits* who in their embodied State *deſpiſed the Blood of the Covenant*. Briefly, Men ſhall continue unalterably in that State in which Death finds them, whether in the Favour of GOD, or under his Diſpleaſure, holy or unholy. Here *Time and Chance happen unto all*. He who one Day is deemed unfortunate and miſerable, may in the next Turn of Providence be advanced to a proſperous and honourable State, whilſt another deſcends to his Meanneſs. But Death *fixes* our Condition in *Honour* or *Diſhonour*, *Glory* or *Shame*, unutterable *Joy*, or remedileſs *Pain*, ſave only that theſe admit of *Increaſe*. And is not this a perſuaſive Motive to *Watchfulneſs* and *Diligence* in our *appointed Work*, ſince the *neglected Time*, may be the critical and peremptory *Time*, beyond which there is no more *Opportunity*. NOW *is the Day of Salvation. To Day, therefore, if ye hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts, leſt he ſwear in his Wrath, that ye ſhall not enter into his Reſt.* Eccleſ. ix. 11. Heb. iii.

2. NOR ought we to be leſs affected with a Senſe of the *laſt Judgment*, when *Soul* and *Body* ſhall be *united*, and be joint Partakers of eternal *Rewards*, or *Puniſhments*. It is certain that a *particular Judgment*, or what is equivalent to it, paſſes upon Souls immediately as they depart out of the Body. From *henceforth* they are *comforted*, or *tormented*; are *with* CHRIST, or by the Doom of an irrevocable *Curſe excluded* his beatifick *Preſence*, and conſigned to a State of *utter Darkneſs*, and conſcious Horrors. But the *full* and *final* RECOMPENCES are reſerved till

the *laſt Day*, when *the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels,* 2 Theſ. i. 7, 10. *in flaming Fire, to take Vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Goſpel, and to be admired in all them that believe.* That ſuch a Day will come, that CHRIST ſhall be the univerſal Judge, that his Appearance will be dreadful, and that with the exacteſt Propor- Rev. xxii. 12. tions, he will *give to every Man according as his Work ſhall be,* are certain, for *theſe are the true Sayings of God:* But of the Day and Hour *when he ſhall come,* no Man knoweth, no not the Angels of Heaven. His Coming is therefore always repreſented as *awful, ſudden,* and *unexpected,* to engage Men to the utmoſt *Diligence* and *Watchfulneſs,* and make them dread the Thoughts of being found *unprepared* for it. *Felix* trembled when St. *Paul* reaſon'd with him of *the Judgment to come.* How then will *wilful Sinners,* and *Apoſtates* tremble, when they ſee and feel this Judgment, and their own Conſciences are arm'd againſt them with ten thouſand Stings of Scorpions, to avenge the once deſpis'd *Dignity* and Authority of the righteous Judge? The Solemnities of that great Day, in which the Creator and Lord of all Things ſhall erect his *Throne of Judgment,* viſible to every Creature, with a burning World under his Feet, cannot but be ſurprizing, for a Time, to all that behold it; but it will be horribly dreadful to the *Unbelieving* and *Impenitent,* who with the utmoſt Conſternation will Rev. vi. cry *to the Mountains to fall upon them, fly into the Clefts of the Rocks, and the Caves of the Earth, for Fear of the Lord, and the Glory of his Majeſty, when he ariſeth to ſhake terribly the Earth.* LORD, *who knoweth the Power of thine Anger? According to thy Fear,* and beyond all the Viſions of Horror that can preſent themſelves to guilty Mortals, *ſo is thy Wrath!* For *the Day of the Lord is very terri-*

ble,

ble, who can abide it! A Day of Wrath, a Joel ii. 11.
Day of Trouble and Anguiſh, (to the Ungodly) *a Day of Waſting and Deſolation*; but in which the *Righteous* will lift up their Heads with Boldneſs and Joy, to celebrate the Equity of the dread Tribunal. And can we look for ſuch a Day, without *paſſing the Time of our ſojourning here in Fear*, and concluding with ourſelves, *what Manner of Perſons we ought to be in all* 2 Pet. iii. 4. *holy Converſation and Godlineſs?*

FREQUENT and ſerious Thoughts on theſe Things, realiz'd by *Faith*, would make us conſtant and earneſt in the Service of GOD, and zealous for his Glory; juſt, merciful, and charitable towards Men; circumſpect in our whole Conduct; moderate and ſelf-denied in the Uſe of allowed Pleaſures, and earthly Enjoyments; ſincerely humble and penitent for Sin; deeply ſenſible of the Neceſſity of an Intereſt in Chriſt, and his Righteouſneſs; diſengag'd from the Love of this World, and unconcern'd with its Fears or Loſſes; heavenly in our Propenſions and Reſolutions; patient in Tribulation, and even joyful when perſecuted or reproach'd for the Sake of CHRIST. *Watch therefore, for ye know not when the Maſter of the Houſe cometh.* And this leads to a

III[d] ARGUMENT with which *this Charge* is ſpirited *viz.* the *gracious Sentence* of CHRIST, pronouncing them BLESSED who ſincerely comply with it. *Bleſſed are thoſe Servants whom the Lord when he cometh ſhall find watching.——And if he ſhall come in the ſecond, or come in the third Watch, and find them ſo, bleſſed are thoſe Servants.* This is the Deciſion of the eternal Judge. WE may conceive of this *Sentence*, as partly executed in this Life; for tho' many Ingredients neceſſary to a *compleat Happineſs* are wanting here, yet the *Saints* and *faithful* Luke xii. 37, 38.

Servants of CHRIST are declared to be, and are comparatively *bleſſed* in their preſent Condition; as they are preferr'd to the Choice Favour of God, delivered from the *Curſe* and Bondage of the LAW, *ſpeaking Wrath*, from the *Power* of *Sin* and *Satan*, and
Rom. iv. 7. *tranſlated into the Kingdom of God's dear Son.*
Acts iii. 26. They are bleſſed in having their *Sins covered*, in being *turned every one from his Iniquities*, and taken into GOD's *Family* and *Houſhold*, as his Friends and Favourites, his *Sons* and *Daughters*. This make their Condition, even in this Vale of Tears, to be a Condition of *Peace*, and *Contentment*, and often of *Gladneſs*. *Being*
Rom. v. 1, 2. *juſtify'd by Faith, we have Peace with God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and rejoyce in the Hope of the Glory of God.* The ſupreme Felicity of Heaven conſiſts in Communion with GOD, in beholding and admiring *his Glory*, in being as *like him*, and as *near* to *him*, as our limited Natures, then wholly purified, and ſanctified, can admit of. And have the Saints *no Share* of that *Bleſſedneſs* in this Life? *Truly their Fellow-*
1 Joh. i. 3. *ſhip is with the* FATHER, *and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt.* They *know* GOD, they *love him*, and *delight* in him as their greateſt Good, tho' they have not yet attained to the *cleareſt Knowledge*, the moſt *perfect Love*, or the moſt *ſatisfying Delight*. They are ſanctified but *in Part*, nevertheleſs they have received from GOD a *new*, even a *di-*
2 Pet. i. 4. *vine Nature, having eſcaped the Pollutions that are in the World through Luſt.* And tho' they have not yet experienced thoſe joyful Ideas that flow from the *beatifick Viſion*, yet they *taſte and ſee that the Lord is gracious*, and know ſo much of his *Perfections*, *Works*, and *Counſels*, as refreſhes them in this Wilderneſs of their Pilgrimage, and makes them long after a full *Fruition*. Briefly, tho' their *Adoption* is

not

not *conſummate*, nor will be till the *Reſur-* 1 Joh. iii. 2.
rection, yet it is *real*. *Now we are the Sons of God.* And great is the Happineſs, Joy and Comfort of this State, when an inward Senſe of *the Love of God is ſhed abroad into the Heart by the Holy Ghoſt given to us*, and *the Spirit itſelf beareth Witneſs to our Spirits that we are the Children of God.* Theſe are the *ſpiritual Rewards* and Fruits of *Faith*, the beginning of *God's Judgment* with Believers. The *Comforts* of this State are *continued*, *felt*, and *enjoyed* in Proportion to the Increaſe and Strength of our Faith, and the lively Exerciſe of other Graces. The more diligently we *watch*, and *pray*, and *labour*, the more ſtedfaſtly we *keep the Faith of Jeſus, and the Commandments of our God*, the greater will our Evidence of our *Adoption* be, the more will GOD love us, and *manifeſt himſelf* unto us.

THUS far of the *Firſt-Fruits* of our *Inheritance*, the *Poſſeſſion* of which is entred upon at *Death*. Then the *Sentence* of CHRIST will take place in a more excellent Manner than our State in this World admits of. *Fleſh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven*, but the diſlodged *Soul* of a Believer, waſhed in the *Blood* of CHRIST, and having obtained a final Victory over Sin, Satan and the World, is prepared and qualified for it, and ſhall be preſented by *Chriſt*, and his holy *Angels*, pure and blameleſs before the Throne of GOD. *Bleſſed are the Dead which dye in the Lord,——They* Rev. xiv. 13.
reſt from their Labours, and their Works do follow them. They not only ceaſe from their toilſome Labours, from the Cares, and Fears, and Dangers of a military State, from the Perſecutions, Temptations, and Afflictions to which they were liable on Earth, and from whatever elſe, whether of *Sin*, or its penal Effects, that could be grievous and calamitous to them; but they are *poſitively bleſſed* in a

State

State of *joyful Activity*, and *Fruition*. Death conſigns them to their *Father's Houſe*, and whatever *Manſion* is there allotted to them, the Place is happy, and full of Comfort, without any Senſe of Evil. There they familiarly converſe, not only with their *Fellow Spirits*, made perfect, who once were *their Companions in Tribulation, and in the Kingdom and Patience of Jeſus Chriſt*, but with the *Angels* themſelves, thoſe glorious *Citizens* and *Natives* of Heaven, who attend at the Throne of God, who are intereſted in their Happineſs, and to whom they are united under CHRIST, their common HEAD. In this State, in the joyful Preſence, and under the Protection of their dear Redeemer, they are in no Fear or Danger of the *ſecond Death*, and have perfect Aſſurance of the *Reſurrection* of their Bodies to *eternal Life*, and of the Reward of *eternal Glory* at the *laſt Day*. Then their Happineſs ſhall have its *full* and *final* Accompliſhment, and vaſtly tranſcend all the Ideas of *Perfection* and *Bleſſedneſs* that the Language of Mortals can convey, or themſelves receive.

Rev. i. 9.

OUR Belief of theſe Things is founded on the moſt infallible Principle of Truth and Certainty, *the Word of* GOD, and the *Teſtimony of* JESUS; who by his own *Death* hath merited this Reward for his faithful Servants, and by his *Reſurrection from the Dead*, hath given us an Aſſurance of obtaining it. Only, we muſt by a holy *Change* of Nature, and a *patient Continuance in well doing*, be firſt qualified for it, becauſe *without Holineſs no Man can ſee the* LORD. Bleſſed are thoſe Servants whom the Lord when he cometh ſhall find watching, *They ſhall be counted worthy to ſtand before the Son of Man*; that is, they are ſanctify'd and prepared for ſo great an Exaltation.

Luke xxi. 36.

And what a mighty Argument have we here to ſtir us up to a Courſe of perſevering Diligence in univerſal Duty? What would not a conſiderate Man, who firmly believes the revealed Promiſes of God concerning another Life, and knows upon the ſtrongeſt Principles of Reaſon, that this World cannot afford true Happineſs, be willing and ready to *do*, or *ſuffer*, to obtain ſo glorious an Eſtate, as *the Inheritance of the Saints in Light?* The firm Expectation of it is ſufficient to overbalance all the Fatigues of *holy Watching*. But how full a *Recompence* will the Poſſeſſion be? When indulgent Sinners have *ſlept* away their precious Time, prodigally waſted their *Talents*, deſpiſed *the Goodneſs of God that leads to Repentance*, and, by a monſtrous Perverſion, *turned his Grace into Laſciviouſneſs*, they ſit down in the End with bitter Reflections on their Stupidity and Folly. How unconcerned ſoever they were in their *Proſperity*, about the laſt and *chief End of Man*, when Death comes, their *Miſery* will awaken them. And then nothing will remain to them, but Treaſures of *unpardoned Guilt*, of *Shame*, and *Remorſe*, and *Confuſion*, and horrible *Deſpair* of ever enjoying *Good*, or being freed from *Evil*, with direful *Preſages*, and dreadful *Expectations* of that *fiery Indignation*, and torturing *Wrath* which will compleat their ever enduring *Pain*, in curſed Fellowſhip with the *Devil* and his *Angels*. Even in this Life, the boldeſt Sons of *Belial* have, now and then, their Intervals of Reflection, in which they feel the Beginnings of thoſe eternal Sorrows. But the *watchful Chriſtian* has a happier Proſpect, and reaps other Fruit. He is not only free from all *tormenting Fears*, but can, with a glorified Joy, realize his *Maſter's Coming*. He can without Emotion, except what raiſeth his Soul to Heaven, reflect on a Life influenc'd *by the Grace of God*, led in *Simplicity* and *Godly Sincerity*, and ſpent

in

in the *Work of the Lord*, with an unfeigned Deſignation to his Glory. *Watch therefore*, for the Fountain of all Bleſſedneſs ſaith, *Behold I come as a Thief. Bleſſed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his Garments, leſt he walk naked, and they ſee his Shame.*

APPLICATION.

LET me, in the Cloſe of all, and in the View of the foregoing Arguments, *Exhort you to a diligent and faithful Proſecution of your great and neceſſary Work, whilſt improveable Time and Talents, with effectual Means of Grace, are continued to you.*

THIS is the Meaning of CHRIST's Words. To this End it is that he commands *all* his *Diſciples* to *watch*. And if ever the Charge was ſeaſonable, it is ſo in our ſecure and ſleepy Age, in which Men ſeem to forget what ſort of Beings they are, and to what noble ENDS the great Creator deſign'd them. Not only *Atheiſts*, and Men infected with *Infidelity*, ſay, with the *Scoffers* of old, *Where is the Promiſe of his coming? The World hath continued as it is from the Beginning, and there is no Appearance that the Faſhion thereof ſhall paſs away*; but many who profeſs the Truth, do yet, by their profligate, or worldly Converſations, ſeem to contemn all Indications of a future State; and the moſt are remiſs and careleſs, and apt to be led away, by a thouſand Impediments, from purſuing their laſt and chiefeſt Good. Few do really believe theſe Things, and fewer retain a lively Impreſſion of what they profeſs to believe, upon their Hearts. It is therefore an unſpeakable Mercy of GOD, that they are ſo clearly revealed to us, and ſo frequently urged upon our Conſciences, that the conſtant View of them may at laſt conſtrain us. God not only declares our Duty, and requires our Obedience, by plain and poſitive Precepts, but aſ-

ſures

ſures us of a Reckoning, that he *will judge the Secrets of Men by Jeſus Chriſt, according to the Goſpel,* and commands us to *watch* that we may be always ready to give up our Accounts *with Joy*. That we may anſwer the *Deſign* of this Condeſcenſion, let us

(1.) BE *ſober* and *temperate in all Things,* (without which we cannot *watch*) obſerving a ſtrict Abſtinence from every Thing that would be a Clog to us in our Chriſtian Race, like thoſe that *ſtrive for the Maſtery*. This is no indifferent Thing. St. *Paul* joins *Temperance* with the ſublimeſt Chriſtian Graces. *Be ſober* (or *vigilant*) *grave, temperate, ſound in Faith, in Charity, in Patience*. And he himſelf *kept under his Body, and brought it into Subjection, leſt,* after all his Labours, *he ſhould be a Caſtaway,* or as one diſapprov'd of God. The great *Contraries* to *watching,* are *Unbelief, Impenitence,* and *Hardneſs of Heart,* the Luſts of *Senſuality,* worldly *Covetouſneſs,* and *Ambition*; to which we may add the *Society* of prophane and atheiſtical Wretches, who are *Satan's Miniſters* to advance his Kingdom, and to decoy the ſecure and ſimple into his Snares. *If a Man purge himſelf from theſe, he ſhall be a Veſſel unto Honour, ſanctified and meet for the Maſter's Uſe, and prepared unto every good Work.* And to this End it becomes us,

1 Cor. ix. 27. Tit. ii. 5. 2 Tim. ii. 21.

(2.) TO be affected with the *Excellency* and *Dignity* of the *Chriſtian Name,* than which no Motive can be ſtronger to engage a Believer, diligently to *watch* againſt every Thing that might aſperſe ſo exalted a Privilege, as that of being *counted worthy of God's Calling,* and *Adoption*. We are frequently exhorted to *walk worthy of the Lord, being fruitful in every*

Col. i. 10, &c.

good Work; that *our Converſation be as it becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt*; and that *we would walk worthy of God, who hath called us to his Kingdom and Glory*. There is a *Worthineſs* of *Merit* which ſome proudly pretend to; but this the Apoſtle, in many Places, rejects, as unſuitable to that Senſe which we ought to have of our *own Sins*, and of the *Grace of* GOD, and of the *Merits* of CHRIST: And there is a Worthineſs of Congruity, ariſing from the Correſpondence there is between our Tempers and Actions, and the Subjects in Relation to which it is recommended. Thus a pure and heavenly Life, full of Faith, and good Works, is *worthy of* GOD; not as it merits any Thing at his Hands, or has any Sufficiency in it to procure the Pardon of Sin, or Juſtification of a Sinner, but as it naturally flows from his Grace in us, as it bears ſome Reſemblance of his Holineſs, and is becoming that Glory to which we are called. This Worthineſs every Chriſtian ſhould be ambitious of. We cannot be too ſenſible of the divine Goodneſs in advancing us to ſuch excellent Prerogatives, as being *Heirs of God*, and *joint Heirs with Chriſt*. Nothing but what is pure and holy, great and generous, and elevated above the Droſs of this Earth, can ſuit ſo great a Dignity, far ſurpaſſing the moſt pompous Titles among Men, who, whilſt they *know not* GOD, are ranked with the *Beaſts that periſh*.

(3. The ſame Conſideration ſhould diſpoſe us to *Sincerity*, and *Singleneſs* of Heart, which are Eſſential to a good Conſcience. Theſe are oppoſed not only to a *cunning Craftineſs*, and *Deceit*, when Men's Words and Actions, having a *Shew* of *Truth* and *Reaſon*, are, yet, replete with *Falſhood*, whereby they are qualified to practiſe ſucceſsful Wickedneſs, but to every Degree of *Diſſimulation* and *Doubleminded-*

neſs,

neſs, in Things pertaining to God or Men. *Bleſſed is the Man in whoſe Heart there is no Guile.* Pſal. xxxii. 2. But with what Confuſion will *Hypocrites* appear before the *omniſcient Judge*, when their moſt hidden Views ſhall be brought to Light, and every Diſguiſe taken off? Their naked Deformity, moſt contrary to the GOD of *Truth*, will then be conſpicuous to Angels and Men. And it will be an Aggravation of the Puniſhment of others, that GOD *will appoint them their Portion with the Hypocrites.* Let us therefore maintain *Sincerity* and *Truth*, which is the Character of our Profeſſion. Let us diſdain to be governed by that *fleſhly Wiſdom*, whoſe Original is from beneath, and live with *Singleneſs of Heart, that whatever we do, we may do it as unto God, who ſearcheth the Heart, and trieth the Reins.* The conſtant Remembrance that he is the Inſpector and Judge of our Actions, will be a great Preſervative againſt all double Dealing.

(4.) THIS will alſo powerfully influence us, to a wiſe and careful Improvement of the *Talents* we are entruſted with by the Providence, or Grace of GOD. From the Parable of the Maſter *travelling into a far Country, and calling his Servants, and delivering to them his Goods*, Mat. xxv. Luke xix. we may learn our Condition in this World, and what is expected from us. We are not mere *paſſive Inſtruments* of the Glory of GOD, but *Truſtees* or *Managers* under him. To every Man there is allotted ſome Province of Buſineſs that demands his Care and Induſtry: *Somewhat*, more or leſs, that may, and ought to be improved with Advantage. There is a Difference in the Diſpoſitions of Providence: All have not received alike; but every one hath received wherewith to glorify God, and to be uſeful in his Sphere. And

every one is put in a *Capacity* to improve what he hath received. This muſt be own'd, and ought to be own'd with Thankfulneſs, by thoſe who not only enjoy the Light of the Goſpel, but can plead the promis'd Influences of the *holy Spirit, according as his divine Power hath given us all Things neceſſary to Life and Godlineſs, thro' the Knowledge of him that hath called us to Glory and Virtue.* Hence the *unprofitable Servant* is condemned not only as *ſlothful*, but as *wicked*, and is accordingly puniſhed: And the *faithful Servant* is rewarded in Proportion to his *Increaſe*, and every one judg'd according to what he *hath received*, not according to what he *did not receive*. Let us therefore *give all Diligence* in the right Management of our ſeveral Truſts. We are not Proprietors of our *Lord's Goods*, to diſpoſe of them at our Pleaſure. It is not left to us whether we ſhall work or not, or, whether we ſhall be *ſlothful* or *diligent* in our Work. For, tho' we are not under the Diſcipline of *Slaves*, who by immediate Correction are kept from Idleneſs, and forcibly compelled to finiſh their Task in a determinate Time, yet, we are not left to act arbitrarily, but are under certain Rules of Conduct, which if we preſumptuouſly tranſgreſs, tho' he bear with us long, and ſeem to *delay his Coming*, we ſhall ſuffer for it another Day.

2 Pet. i. 4.

It were eaſy to apply theſe Things to particular *Stations* and *Circumſtances* in Life. They that are *rich in this World*, are, as *Truſtees* of the Bounties of Providence, commanded to *do good, that they be rich in good Works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate* to others of their Wealth, *laying up in ſtore for themſelves a good Treaſure againſt the Time*

1 Tim. vi. 18, 19.

Time to come, that when theſe earthly Things fail, *they may lay hold on eternal Life.* And happy are they who form a pure Principle of Love and Charity, and Deſire of GOD's Approbation, do in this Manner *make Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs,* who prudently and generouſly lay out their Riches to the Ends for which they were entruſted with them. But thoſe in *that Capacity,* who act otherwiſe, *have received their Conſolation.* God will not commit *the true eternal Riches* to the Truſt of thoſe, who are not *faithful Stewards* in diſpenſing the *deceitful Riches* of this World, to the Uſes for which they were given. Luke xvi. 4.

IN like Manner *Magiſtrates* and Men in Power, are allowed of GOD to be entruſted with *Authority,* not for their own Sakes, but for the Good of others; that they may be *a Terror to evil Doers,* and protect and encourage *thoſe that do well.*

MINISTERS are *Stewards of the Myſteries of God.* They are to attend conſtantly on *divine Miniſtrations,* or in *preparing* for them; they are to *labour in the Word and Doctrine,* to *feed,* and *watch over the Flock of God,* as much as in them is; *and that willingly, not for filthy Lucre, but of a ready Mind, neither as being Lords over God's Heritage,* but as *Helpers of their Joy,* and *Examples* to them in all Godlineſs. They are ſet for the Defence of the Goſpel, and it is their proper Buſineſs to maintain the Purity of *Faith* and *Worſhip,* to preſerve their People from corrupt Doctrines and Converſations, and to oppoſe the Growth of *dangerous Errors,* or *prevailing Vices.* They are to inſtruct the *Ignorant,* to bear the Infirmities of the *Weak,* to conſolate the Griefs of the *Afflicted,* and to *warn* and *rebuke* the openly

openly Erroneous or *Vitious*, without *Reſpect of Perſons*, without *Partiality*, and without *Hypocriſy*, not ſhunning to declare *the whole Counſel of* GOD. It behoves them therefore, of all Men, to be faithful and diligent in all the Duties of their *Office*. They have the moſt *honourable Work* allotted to them, tho' hard and difficult, and the *higheſt Rewards* propoſed for their Encouragement to *Labour* and *Watchfulneſs*; but woe unto them if they *perform the Work of the Lord* with a careleſs Mind, when the Salvation of Souls is concerned in it. If through their *wilful Neglect* of neceſſary Inſtruction, or due Warning, or through their *ill Example*, any are *hardned in Sin*, or carried away with *the Error of the Wicked*, or fall a Prey to *Satan*, God threatens to *require the Blood* of ſuch at their Hands, and the final Miſcarriage of ſuch unhappy Souls will be an Aggravation of their Guilt and Puniſhment. Ezek. iii.

THUS Men of all Stations have their appointed Work and Truſt, *to manage*, and *to account for*, with reſpect to which it ſhould be their perpetual Care to approve themſelves to their LORD and *Maſter* at *his Coming*. Work therefore *while it is Day, for the Night cometh in which no Man can work. Be not ſlothful in Buſineſs, but fervent in Spirit, ſerving the* LORD. Conſider your *Character*, your *Truſt*, your *Proſpects*, your *preſent Advantages* and *Opportunities*, the *Uncertainty of the Time* of their Continuance, and how much depends upon your living *anſwerably* to them. And

(5.) THAT our Minds may be habitually impreſt with a vigorous Senſe of theſe important Things, let us, in the *laſt* Place, call *ourſelves daily to an Account*, and try ourſelves in the Light of God's Word, whether

whether we are *faithful* or not: To this End God has erected in our Breaſts the *Tribunal* of Conſcience, which is both Witneſs and Judge of our Thoughts and Actions. If our *Heart condemn us* of *Hypocriſy*, and wilful Diſobedience, GOD *is greater than our Hearts,* 1 John iii. 20, 21. *and knoweth all Things*: But, if after an impartial Search *our Heart condemn not* of Inſincerity in our Obedience, *then have we Conſcience towards God* that we are approved of him. If we are thus employ'd, we ſhall find much Cauſe of *Humiliation* and *Repentance*, and be convinced how neceſſary it is to *watch and pray always*.

HAVING thus gone through the ſeveral *Heads* of Diſcourſe I promiſed to conſider in handling the *Text*, I ſhall, in what follows, ſpeak ſomewhat farther of that eminently *faithful Servant* of CHRIST, whoſe Deceaſe we now lament, and who in every Capacity in which he ſtood, exemplified all the Duties of *holy Watching*, and *perſevering Diligence*, in the Service of his LORD and MASTER; whom to honour was the chief Concern and Buſineſs of his Life.

SOME

ACCOUNT

OF THE

LIFE and CHARACTER

Of the REVEREND

Mr. *Benjamin Robinſon.*

The INTRODUCTION.

IT was a Practice in the primitive *Churches* to keep a *Regiſter*, or *Table* of the NAMES of ſuch as adorned their Profeſſion, with a Converſation becoming the Goſpel, who lived and died in the Faith. Tho' this Practice was afterwards abuſed to Superſtition, yet the original Deſign of it ſeems to have been

been juſt and laudable. To retain an honourable Memory of the righteous Dead, whereby the Living may be excited to be Followers of them in Faith and Patience, is a natural Duty, to which we are encourag'd by Precedents and Promiſes in *Scripture*. *The Righteous ſhall be in everlaſting Remembrance.* Their Memory will be acceptable and honourable with GOD and Men. And the *more* conſpicuous their Righteouſneſs and Goodneſs have been, eſpecially in Stations of *publick* and *extenſive* Uſefulneſs, the more precious will their *Remembrance* be. It would have been a great Satisfaction to me, and would have better ſecur'd the Regards due to ſo great and good a NAME, as that of worthy Mr. *Robinſon*, if this Work had been devolved upon a Perſon more equal to the *Subject*. But as the Argument of a particular *Friendſhip* and *Reſpect*, was what prevailed with me to undertake it, I have not been wanting in my Endeavours, to obtain by Information from others, what my own perſonal Acquaintance with him (tho' of ſeveral Years ſtanding) could not furniſh me with. A very worthy Perſon, who for a long Time has been his moſt dear and intimate Friend, and ſubſervient to him in his Miniſtry, who hereby had the beſt Opportunities of knowing him thoroughly, has favour'd me with ſome Memoirs, and other Remarks, which he has allowed me

Pſal. cxii. 6.

to make uſe of. I have had Hints given me alſo from others of my Brethren, who have the utmoſt Veneration for the Memory of the Deceaſed. And many Things I can ſay of my own Knowledge. So that whatever other Defects may be obſerved in this Account, the Truth of Things may be relied on. Nor are the Embelliſhments of Art needful to ſet off a Character that has for many Years ſhone illuſtrious in the *Church* of GOD. What I have to offer on this Subject ſhall be laid in the following *Sections*.

SECT. I.

Some MEMOIRS *of his* LIFE.

THE late REVEREND Mr. *Benjamin Robinſon* was born at *Derby*, of worthy and pious Parentage. His Mother died a few Days after her Delivery of him; but Providence, which deſign'd him for eminent Service in the Church, inſpected his tender and infant State. As Reaſon advanc'd, his good Father took all proper Care to have his Mind rightly form'd, and impreſs'd with the beſt Principles, and was ſo happy as to ſee in this Son, and in two more, the early Succeſs of his pious Inſtructions, and Example.

HE had his Grammar Learning under Mr. *Ogden*, a polite Scholar, and Maſter of a School in *Derby*, where he made a conſiderable Progreſs in the *Latin*, *Greek*, and *Hebrew* Languages. He was ſoon removed

from thence to the Care of the late *Reverend* Mr. *John Woodhouſe*, then of *Sherriff-Hales*, with whom he went thro' his *academical* Studies, and whom he afterwards ſucceeded as *Paſtor* in this *Church*, according to what Mr. *Woodhouſe* himſelf wiſh'd, having, before his Death, recommended him, particularly to ſome, as moſt ſuitable to his People.

AFTER ſome Years Continuance with this worthy Perſon, that he might proſecute his Studies (being then devoted to the *Miniſtry*) with the beſt Advantage that Providence, at that Time, laid open to him, he removed into the Family of *Sir John Gell*, where he kept up *Family Religion*, and apply'd himſelf to ſevere and cloſe Study, obſerving an Abſtemiouſneſs, as to Recreation and Diet, more than was conducive to Health, and which he was wont to ſay, laid the Foundation of thoſe ſtomatick Diſorders, and Loſs of Appetite, under which he labour'd ever after. Here he became perſonally acquainted with that great and good Man, the *Reverend* Mr. *Richard Baxter*; for whom, many Years after, he wrote an accurate and learned PLEA, in anſwer to an inſinuated Charge of *Socinianiſm*.

HE afterwards embrac'd an Invitation to Mr. *Samuel Saunders's* of *Normanton*, where, as domeſtick *Chaplain*, he was very uſeful,

uſeful, and much reſpected. The Converſation of the Family, and a valuable Library, rendred his Settlement in this Place very pleaſant to him. Here alſo he exerciſed his publick *Miniſtry*, in Turn with ſeveral others *; the Country round about reſorting to him in great Numbers (*from nineteen Pariſhes*) many of whom ſpeak of his Labours among them to this Day, with the higheſt Eſteem, and moſt affectionate Regard to his Memory.

MR. *Saunders* dying, and Mr. *Robinſon* himſelf altering his Condition, he removed to *Findern* in *Derbyſhire*.

HE was ſolemnly *ordain'd* to the *Work of the Miniſtry*, *October* 10th, 1688, in Company with his moſt eſteemed Friend, the Reverend Mr. *Nathaniel Oldfield*, long ſince with GOD. The Senſe he had of the *Importance* of that *ſacred Truſt*, and with what Awe, and Seriouſneſs of Spirit he entered upon it, will beſt appear from his own Words on that Occaſion; which are theſe that follow.

" LAST of all, I, who am *leſs than the* " *leaſt of all Saints*, was devoted to the " Work and Service of God, and Souls.

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* The *Reverend Mr. Whitlock, Mr. Barret, Mr. Reynolds, Mr. Croſs.*

" *Quer.*

" *Quer.* From what Principle, in what Man-
" ner, for what End do I enter upon this
" *ſacred Office?* In the Preſence of GOD,
" I charge you, O *Conſcience*, that you
" charge my *Ordination Vows* ſeriouſly up-
" on my Spirit, whenever I have too great
" an Indifferency to the Work of my
" MASTER, and to prevent, or help againſt
" Coldneſs, and Heartleſſneſs, in, and be-
" fore every Sermon. Remember me, WHO
" ſends me, upon what Errand, with what
" a dreadful Charge of requiring the Blood
" of Souls at my Hands, that periſh thro'
" my Unfaithfulneſs. Remember me, of
" his encouraging Promiſes of Succeſs, at
" leaſt of perſonal Salvation, if faithful.
" This I charge you with, that you charge
" it not on me reflectingly, when it may
" grate upon me, but cannot be helpful to
" me.

SO ſolemn and ſerious a Tranſaction with GOD and *Conſcience*, was followed with many Self Reſearches, of which the following are a few Inſtances.

" SUCH a Time (he ſays in one Place)
" I found my Heart griev'd for Sin, and
" GOD made my Sorrows to abound. The
" LORD keep me true to my Engagements
" made with him that Evening." And in another Place, " Such a Day I humbled my
" Soul before GOD, on a ſpecial Occaſion.

" May

"May I never forget the Tranſactions that "then paſſed between him and me." And again, "O what great Fluctuations, upon "ſerious Recollection, do I find in my ſpi-"ritual State and Courſe? What Ups and "Downs? what Heats and Coolings?

THUS ſetting out, it ſoon appeared he was in earneſt with God. And tho' the Times were then diſcouraging, he went to the utmoſt of his Power, into the moſt diffuſive Uſefulneſs. His Labours were not confin'd to his own particular Charge, but extended to divers other Places. He, and Mr. *Oldfield* abovementioned, ſet up and ſupply'd many *Lectures*, and ſome of them at very inconvenient Diſtances. So ſenſible was he of the Obligations that lye upon *Miniſters*, to *abound in the Work of the* LORD.

HIS Learning and good Senſe, his unaffected Piety, and obliging Carriage, ſoon made him known to many worthy Gentlemen, *Clergy*, and others, from whom he had ſuch Offers of Preferment in the National *Church*, as were not to be reſiſted upon Humor, or Faction, or from any other Principle but that of pure Conſcience.

AT *Findern* he ſet up a private Grammar *School*, in the Year 1693; for which he was cited into the Biſhop of *Litchfield* and *Coventry*'s Court. But that Trouble was ſoon

ſoon over upon his perſonal Application to, and Acquaintance with the learned and renowned Dr. *Lloyd*, Biſhop of that *Dioceſs*, afterwards tranſlated to the *See* of *Worceſter*. Here, that good Biſhop condeſcended to an amicable Debate with Mr. *Robinſon* upon his *Nonconformity*, which, tho' begun in due Time, (as the Biſhop's Age, and State of Health required) laſted, between themſelves, till two in the Morning. Mr. *Robinſon* was diſmiſs'd with particular Marks of Favour from that great *Prelate*, who was pleaſed afterwards to hold a Correſpondence with him in Writing; the Memoirs of which are among Mr. *Robinſon*'s Papers.

About this Time, if not ſooner, he became acquainted with the great and venerable Mr. Howe, who ſoon diſcern'd his ſolid Judgment, his ready Penetration, the Seriouſneſs of his Spirit, with his Fervour and Earneſtneſs in divine Things; and pleaſing himſelf with the Proſpect of great Service to the *Church* of God, from the *Miniſtry*, and other Labours, of a Perſon in whom there was ſuch a rare Conjunction of all neceſſary Endowments, was unwilling he ſhould remain in ſo remote and obſcure a Place as *Findern*, and reſolved to embrace the firſt Opportunity of bringing him nearer *London*.

From

From *Findern* he was called to *Hungerford*, in *Berkshire*, where Mr. Howe, who prevailed with him to accept of an Invitation from that People, met him, and settled him among them, with a Solemnity peculiar to himself. Here he exercised his publick *Ministry*, with great Acceptance for seven Years. And in 1696, set up a private *Academy*, at the earnest Request of his Brethren in those Parts. This procur'd him some Enemies. And Complaint being made of him to that great Ornament of the Church of *England*, the excellent Bishop *Burnet*, he was sent for by the Bishop, in his Progress, on a Visitation, through *Hungerford*. Mr. *Robinson* waited on his Lordship at his Lodgings, and gave him such Satisfaction, both as to that Undertaking, and his *Nonconformity*, as laid the Foundation of a good Understanding, and kind Intimacy between them ever after.

As he was well qualified for, and constant and diligent in his Work, so God blessed him with Success. He brought up many for the *Ministry*, some of whom are still useful in the Church; tho' others, either Death prevented, or a dubious State of Health, hath at present prescinded from publick Service. He was at that Time also a Guide to many younger *Ministers* settled in the neighbouring Parts, who, in private

Conferences, and on more publick Occasions, (especially their Quarterly Meetings at *Newbury*, in which it was their Custom to handle a *Thesis* on some *theological* Argument, at which Mr. *Robinson* was excellent) receiv'd that Light from him, which was greatly beneficial to themselves, and their Hearers.

MR. HOWE, who from their first Acquaintance kept his Eye upon him, and grew in his Esteem of him, long'd to have him nearer to himself. And Providence giving the Opportunity, he came to *London*, and (as you know) succeeded the *Reverend* Mr. WOODHOUSE in the *pastoral Office* here. Many of you remember what Manner of *Entrance* he had among you, *that it was not in vain*. His *Exhortations were not of Deceit, nor in Guile, but as* he *was allowed of* GOD *to be put in Trust with the Gospel* amongst you, *even so* he *spake not as pleasing Men, but* GOD, *who trieth our Hearts. For neither at any Time us'd* he *flattering Words, as ye know, nor a Cloke of Covetousness: Nor of Men sought* he *Glory, neither of you, nor yet of others; but exhorted, and comforted, and charg'd every one of you, as a Father doth his Children, that you would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his Kingdom and Glory.*

1 Thes. ii.

AND

AND as you are Witneſſes, how *affectionately deſirous he was* of your Salvation, *how holily, and juſtly, and unblameably* he *behav'd* himſelf *among you*; ſo it cannot but be comfortable to you to reflect, that when he preach'd unto you *the Goſpel of God*, his Labours were accompanied with the Efficacy of divine Grace. Sinners have been here *converted from the Error of their Way, and their Souls ſav'd from Death*; the *new born* Chriſtian cheriſhed, and improved in ſpiritual Knowledge and Life; the *Weak* ſtrengthen'd; the *trembling* and *doubting* Soul ſatisfy'd; the *Tempted* reſcued; and the *aged dying* Saint fortified and prepared to encounter *Death*, that *laſt Enemy that ſhall be deſtroyed*. Many of theſe he liv'd to ſee get the Start of him, and firſt enter upon the heavenly Reward, and would often ſpeak of them, and the Uſefulneſs of his *Miniſtry* to them, with great Satisfaction, as of others, ſtill left, with great Hope. *Look to yourſelves*, therefore, *that ye loſe not thoſe Things, which*, under GOD, he and you *have wrought*, or gain'd. *Whoſoever tranſgreſſeth, and abideth not in the Doctrine of Chriſt, hath not God: He that abideth in the Doctrine of Chriſt, he hath both the Father, and the Son.* Time was when he and you have *ſung*, and *pray'd*, and *faſted*, and

2 John viii. 9.

and *wept* together, but it ſhall be ſo no more. The *Sermons* you have heard from him, the *Sabbaths* you have ſpent with him, are now over. O! may they never be loſt, as they are gone. He, happy Saint! is now with GOD. All Tears are wip'd away from his Eyes, all Sorrows are departed from his Heart, and he is employ'd in *ſeraphick Miniſtries*, full of Zeal and Joy, before the *Throne* of *Glory*. But you are ſtill in an *evil World*, in which it is your greateſt Privilege that you enjoy the *uncorrupted Miniſtry* of the Goſpel, and have Acceſs, with holy *Fear* and *Trembling*, to the *Throne* of *Grace*. Remember therefore, and *hold faſt* what you have *heard* and *received*, that you may not fail of that full Reward, which is reſerved only for thoſe who are *faithful unto Death*. To proceed,

HE came to you in the Prime of his Days, when his Judgment, Parts, Strength, Memory, and Elocution were in their Vigour and Glory, which like a *faithful Steward*, and *diligent Paſtor*, he readily laid out for the Honour of GOD, and the Good of Souls. He began his Miniſtry among you like a wiſe Maſter Builder, looking well to the Foundations, or the great and ſubſtantial Principles of our holy Faith. With what Seriouſneſs, with what Earneſtneſs in preaching, with what Plainneſs and Freedom of Speech, and yet with what uncommon

Judgment and Exactneſs, he managed the great Subjects and Arguments of the Goſpel, cannot be forgotten by thoſe who long enjoy'd the invaluable Bleſſing of his Miniſtry.

He was many Ways uſeful in this great City, to the common Intereſts of Chriſtianity. Whilſt Strength permitted, he frequently preach'd Morning and Evening *Lectures*, beſides his ſtated Work. And, as many *private Families*, whether in joyous or afflicted Circumſtances, have bleſſed God for him: So there are few *Pulpits* of Note in this *City*, that have not been favoured with his publick Performances. The worthy *Society* of *Merchants*, that ſupport the Tueſday's *Lecture* at Salter's-Hall, deſervedly, choſe him to be one of their Preachers, upon the Death of that antient *Diſciple*, and worthy *Miniſter* of Christ, Mr. *George Hammond*, in the Year 1705; in which Lecture he continued to the Time of his Death, ſupplying his Turn with great Conſtancy, and encouraging Succeſs. In his declining State, when the growing Infirmities of his Body would not admit of conſtant Labour, he has, ſometimes, reſerved himſelf for that *Pulpit*, knowing that at Salter's-Hall he ſhould not only meet with ſome of his own People, but have Opportunity of doing good to a greater Number, of different Congregations, at the ſame

Time.

Time. And it was remarkable how much a large, and serious Auditory, would, to the last, draw out his Zeal and Fervency both in preaching and praying.

SECT. II.

Of his Ministerial and Personal Character.

THE foregoing Observations may help us to conceive a Portraiture of the worthy Subject now before us, in whatever Light we consider him.

IT may without the least Suspicion of Flattery, be said of Mr. ROBINSON, that he was eminently furnished with all those Qualifications and Endowments that are requisite to an *able* and *acceptable Minister of the New Testament.*

HE had a *natural* Capacity and Genius superior to most Men. His bodily Constitution (tho' too much neglected, and impair'd by publick Cares) was clean and sprightly, his Person well form'd, and of an agreeable

agreeable Aſpect. But the Soul that animated that *earthen Veſſel*, was heavenly born; a *ſeraphick* Eſſence; a truly intelligent and vital Spirit, fitly fram'd by the *Father of Lights* to inform a Meſſenger of his Will. As God was liberal to him of his Gifts, he was diligent in cultivating, and improving them to his Glory, for which he had the beſt Opportunities. Whilſt he was a *Tutor* to others, and taught them Knowledge, he himſelf acquir'd a large Stock of the moſt uſeful Learning, both rational and theological, with Reſpect to which he was a *Maſter in our Iſrael.*

He excelled in his Knowledge of the *Scriptures*, that ſacred Repoſitory of heavenly Wiſdom. Theſe, with critical and practical Comments upon them, were his conſtant Study, and moſt delightful Entertainment. He was remarkable for his Regard to the ſtrict and genuine *Senſe* of Scripture, according to the beſt Rules of Interpretation. His Penetration was deep, as well as ready, and his Judgment ſolid. He was not ſatisfied with a ſuperficial Knowledge of Things, nor carried away with a ſound of Words, but entered far into a Subject, reaſon'd cloſely, conſidered the Connexion of divine Truths one with another, and would often ſurpriſe thoſe that heard him with uncommon Obſervations, yet attended with the cleareſt Evidence,

They

THEY ill conſult the Good of the *Church*, (eſpecially in a well ſettled State of Things) who look upon *Learning* as an unneceſſary Qualification in a Goſpel *Miniſter*. Inſpiration and Miracles are not to be expected. From the Times of the *Apoſtles*, the *primitive Church* abounded with learned Men, who were able to defend the Truth againſt its ſubtleſt Adverſaries. When towards the beginning of the ninth *Century*, Learning greatly declin'd, it was Ignorance and Stupidity, that diſpos'd *Miniſters* and *People* to ſit down in *antichriſtian Darkneſs*. And 'tis well known, that the Reſtoration of antient Learning, and the Reformation from Popery, have the ſame Date. The Goſpel is not only to be read to the People in their *vulgar Tongues*, but that rich Mine is to be dug deep into, and its hidden Treaſures unfolded. Things *hard to be underſtood*, do often contain Truths of great Importance, which by a *clear* and *juſt Interpretation*, according to the Analogy of Faith, may be rendred obvious to the meaneſt Capacities, and without which, *the Unlearned* may *wreſt them to their own Hurt*. Seeming Difficulties muſt be removed, and plauſible Objections anſwered. Briefly, the Word of God muſt be *explained* and *applied*, its *Truth* defended againſt *Unbelievers*, its ſublime *Myſteries*, and ſacred *Doctrines* reſcued from the corrupt Gloſſes of *heretical*

Men,

Men, and the *Sophiſtry* and *Craftineſs* of Seducers detected. Mr. *Robinſon* was excellently qualified for theſe Things. He could have Recourſe to his BIBLE in its *Originals*. He was *apt to teach*, and powerful to *convince Gainſayers*, or to refute their Errors. He was not only a *Preacher of Righteouſneſs*, but an able Champion, and ſtrenuous Advocate for *the Faith*. He could ſee through the Diſguiſes of Error, and diſpel thoſe Miſts with which learned Men do ſometimes ſhade over the cleareſt Truths. The moſt difficult Subjects he could render plain. His Thoughts were diſtinct, and Recollection was eaſy to him: He had a nervous Way of Reaſoning, and forc'd *Conviction*, not by a deceitful Eloquence, but by dint of Argument. A Subject was improv'd by his Management of it. And ſuch was his Knowledge in *Words*, and the Reach of his Underſtanding in *Things*, that he was not liable to be impos'd upon by a fallacious Way of arguing. His learned *Works* publiſhed to the World, are a permanent Teſtimony of his great Abilities.

As he was eminently furniſhed for all the *Duties* of his *Office*, ſo no Man was more faithful in the *Diſcharge* of them. Whatever Notion thoſe Men, who look upon themſelves as *Prieſts* and *Saviours*, may have of the ſacred Function, the moſt neceſſary Part of a Miniſter's Work, and moſt

eſſential to his Character, as an *Ambaſſador for* CHRIST, is to *preach the Goſpel*, that by a clear and convincing *Manifeſtation of the Truth* unto the Conſciences of Men, *Sinners* may be *turn'd to* GOD, through a *Mediator*, the *Saints* gradually perfected, and the *Body* of CHRIST *edified*. This was Mr. *Robinſon*'s daily Care, and conſtant Employment. And he perform'd it with great Skilfulneſs, with uncorrupted Integrity, and in the beſt Manner.

THE uſual *Matter* of his Sermons were the great and neceſſary Points of Chriſtian Faith, and Practice. I am well informed, that when he came firſt to *London*, he began his Miniſtry with thoſe Subjects which are the Foundations of true Religion; the Being and Attributes of GOD; the Authority and Perfection of Scripture; the Unity of the Godhead; the Trinity of Perſons in the divine Eſſence; the Incarnation of the eternal WORD, the Maker and Lord of all; the perſonal Union of the divine and human Natures in the Son of God; the Offices of the *Mediator*, as Prophet, Prieſt, and King; the Doctrine of original Sin, as the Sin, and Corruption of all Mankind; the Satisfaction of CHRIST, made to the divine Juſtice, for the Sins of Men, original and actual; the *Work* and *Office* of the bleſſed *Spirit* in the divine Oeconomy; the Way in which Sinners are made Partakers of the

moſt perfect Redemption that is in Chriſt; the Conſtitution of the Goſpel Covenant; with the Doctrines of Repentance towards GOD, and Faith in our LORD JESUS CHRIST, without which we have not a preſent, pleadable Right to the Salvation purchaſed by him.

UPON this Foundation he built, not *Hay* nor *Stubble*, but *ſound* evangelical *Doctrine*, properly directed to make Men *wiſe unto Salvation*. He conſidered himſelf a *Miniſter* of CHRIST, and would not defecrate his Office with *human Policies*, or Speculations foreign to his Commiſſion. His Mind was too much impreſs'd with the great Ends of the Miniſtry, to admit of any Vacation for unneceſſary Studies, unprofitable Queſtions, needleſs or intricate Diſputes, or any Notions barren of all good *Fruit*. His ſuperior Learning and Capacity could not but appear in his ſtudied Performances, but theſe were always pointed to improve his Hearers, in thoſe Things which were moſt important, and uſeful to them. He was ſenſible, that, whatever Pretences Men may make to Probity and Virtue, upon common, natural Principles, yet the *Grace* and *Truth* of the Goſpel, are the only true, and effectual Springs of that *Holineſs, without which no Man can ſee the Lord*. The *Things*, therefore, *of the Spirit of* GOD, were the Things he labour'd in. 'Tis true,

as he always had a deep Senſe of the Majeſty, and Authority of God upon his Soul, ſo he greatly *delighted in his Law*, and often vindicated, with irrecuſable Arguments, its binding and laſting Obligation upon Conſcience. But he preach'd not the *Law*, without *Chriſt*, his Righteouſneſs and Satisfaction. He was not partial in the Things of God. He inſiſted on Duties, and Priviledges. When he vindicated the *Law*, he directed Chriſtians to their proper Dependance; and was far from being ſhy in aſſerting thoſe Principles of divine Grace, by which we muſt be ſaved. His Sermons were not a dry Compoſition of mere *moral Philoſophy*, tho' none underſtood it better, but contain'd the *Truth of the Goſpel, according to Godlineſs*.

His *Manner* of preaching was ſuitable to the Dignity, and Excellency of the Subjects he treated on; grave, ſerious, and affecting. His extenſive Knowledge, and quick Perception, rendred Compoſure eaſy to him. One, very intimate with him, uſed to ſay, that if his Health admitted, he could do more in an Hour, than moſt Men he knew in a Day. Yet his Performances would, to the beſt Judges, appear to have been the Reſult of labour'd Study, and long Reflexion. He was uncapable of any thing that was mean, or ſpiritleſs. His Matter was always excellent, his Method exact, his Stile accurate,

and

and his Delivery ſuch as fix'd a rational Attention. He was ſcarce known to ſpeak improperly, in the freeſt Converſation, much leſs in handling ſacred Things. He had a rich Fancy, and a warm Imagination, but theſe were directed by a ſound Judgment. He thought what he ſaid. Hence his Words were full of Senſe, and ſuited to convey Inſtruction to the Mind. He diſdain'd the mechanical Arts of thoſe, who, to gain the Applauſe of the Ignorant, or to make a Shew of Wit, put their Diſcourſes in a theatrical Dreſs. Gawdy Images, and artificial Flouriſhes of Rhetorick, may intice a carnal Ear, but cannot ſtrike a carnal Heart with any ſerious Impreſſions. His Eloquence was natural, and manly, anſwering the Ends of Speech, and adapted to Ratiocination. Such was his Judgment in the Scriptures, that it was ſcarce poſſible for him, to make an impertinent Application of them, and he abhorr'd the Prophanation of uſing Scripture Words, for the Sake of a Gingle of Sounds, without Regard to their ſtrict and proper Meaning.

A GREAT *Serioufneſs of Spirit* ran thro' his intire Converſation. Such is the ſtrict Union of Soul and Body, and their mutual Sympathy, that the moſt predominant Thoughts, and Affections of the Mind, and Heart, are often legible in the outward Mein and Action. His whole Deportment, his e-

very

very Look, and Motion, as well as his ſavory Words, were natural, and unaffected Indications of a Mind deeply impreſs'd with the Sentiments of Piety, and Religion. This was moſt conſpicuous in the *Pulpit*, when he pleaded with GOD, as an Advocate for Souls, or treated with Men as an Ambaſſador of CHRIST.

NEVER was a Soul acted with a warmer *Zeal for God* than his. He was a burning and a ſhining Light. What the *Pſalmiſt* ſings of *Angels* may be applied here, GOD made *his Miniſter a Flame of Fire*; but it was of the *kindly Sort*, that *enlivens* and *cheriſhes* all about it. The Corruption of the moſt noble, and moſt efficacious Paſſions of the Soul, is the worſt Corruption. *Love*, the ſupreme Affection, when miſplac'd, *is the Root of all Evil*. There is a *Zeal* that is productive of the greateſt Miſchiefs. Such is the *Zeal* of Perſecutors, and Impoſers in Religion. The beſt Apology can be made for it, is, That it proceeds from Ignorance and Folly; though for the moſt Part, Pride, Covetouſneſs, and Luſt of Dominion, are the Fewel that feeds it; and the Things about which it is chiefly employ'd, are *Mens* own *Inventions*, not the *Cauſe of* GOD. His *Zeal* flowed from an inward Principle of *Faith, that works by Love*, and being join'd with Knowledge, Candour, and univerſal Benevolence, qualified him for excel-

lent Services. It had not the leaſt Spice of Rancour in it. It *work'd no ill to its Neighbour*. The Honour of CHRIST, and the Good of Souls, was what it aim'd at. He was greatly affected with the Corruptions of the *preſent Age*, in Matters of Religion; and lamented the too general Defection there is among *the Reform'd*, from *Goſpel Principles*; even thoſe, which at the Beginning of the *Reformation*, were univerſally eſteemed the grand Characteriſticks of *true Proteſtants*. He could not but ſee the bold and undiſguis'd Attacks that were made upon *reveal'd Religion*; and the mighty Oppoſition that was form'd by Men of great Learning, and Influence, againſt ſome of thoſe Doctrines that are moſt *eſſential* to the *Chriſtian Faith*, whereby, under a Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, the Chriſtian Religion was betrayed into the Hands of *Deiſts*, and *Infidels*: And, as a faithful *Watchman*, he gave Warning of the Danger with which thoſe evil Symptoms threatned the *Church* of GOD; and, with unwearied Diligence, endeavoured to propagate, and maintain *the Faith*, which he ſaw was thus undermined. Such a *Zeal* for pure and undefiled Religion, is what our *Lord* commends in the *Angel* of the Church of *Epheſus*, *Rev.* ii. *I know thy Works, and thy Labour, and thy Patience* (or, thy Patience in Labour) *and how thou canſt not bear* (or partake with) *them that are evil*, in their evil Deeds.

Briefly,

Briefly, his *Zeal* was an effectual Spring of Activity and Diligence in his Maſter's Work; a pure and heavenly Flame, that made him ſpeak the Things of GOD, with ſuch Earneſtneſs, that his Words would penetrate into the inmoſt Receſſes of the Soul, and leave an Impreſſion where the Obſtinacy, or Prejudice was not invincible.

HE had a profound Regard to all the *Truths* of GOD, and would not part with them upon any Terms. But his Concern for divine Truths, and Zeal in the Maintenance of them, roſe, in Proportion to what he apprehended was their Importance in Religion, and the Oppoſition made to them in his own Time. Hence, of late Years, his Thoughts were chiefly bent to the Defence and Vindication of the Doctrine of the *ever bleſſed Trinity*, the *true eternal* GODHEAD of CHRIST, and of the *holy* SPIRIT, which he juſtly regarded as the Foundation, Heart, and Soul of Chriſtianity, whence all its ſaving Influences are derived. What he did in this Way, in which he had the utmoſt Satisfaction to the laſt, is of ſo publick a Nature, that I need not diſtinctly mention it.

AS to Matters of leſſer Moment, that may be controverted among Proteſtants, his *Moderation* was well known. His *Diſſent* from the *eſtabliſh'd Church* was no Bar to his Charity towards thoſe of *that Communion*,

nion, many of whom he contracted an intimate Acquaintance with, and were highly esteem'd and lov'd by him, as Christian Brethren; tho' *Judgment* and *Conscience* oblig'd him to imbark with *Protestant Dissenters*, when all *worldly Considerations* dissuaded from it.

He was for an impartial *Toleration* in Matters of Religion, that do not affect the publick Tranquility, but lie only between God and *Conscience*; and against all *Imposition* of any other *Terms* of *Christian Communion*, than *those* which are plainly declared, or from the Nature of Things manifestly appear to be made, necessary in Scripture. He was for an Union of Heart and Affections, between all Protestants, *holding the Head*, and agreeing in the *Essentials* of Christian Faith, and Worship, with respect to which his Principles were not narrow.

His *Charity* was truly Catholick. It comprehended Heaven and Earth in its Bosom. His superlative Love to God, was manifest in a pure and fervent Affection to all that bore his Image. He thought nothing too much to do, or endure, for the Salvation of Souls, redeemed by the infinite Expence of Christ's *Blood*. His very Life was ready to be offered a *Sacrifice*, if that might be a proper Mean to promote so glorious

an End. His *Soul* was naturally moſt *affectionate*, and being inſpir'd from above, his *Charity* was truly divine, being accompanied with an inviolable Regard to *Truth*, and *Righteouſneſs*. The Perſons of Men, not their Errors or Vices, were the Objects of it. And as he was full of the *Thing*, he would not pervert the *Word*, or uſe it as a Cloak of *Party-Reſentment*, to inſinuate a Reproach upon others, as if they were void of a Principle ſo eſſential to the Chriſtian Character. In a Word, he was *pure* and *peaceable*, and never ſuffered his Zeal for a Party to ſwallow up his Concern for the common Intereſts of Chriſtianity. It was not only his Principle, but the ruling Diſpoſition of his Mind, to *follow Peace with all Men*, as much as he judg'd could *poſſibly* conſiſt with a *good Conſcience towards* GOD.

AND oh! that ſuch a Temper did more prevail! that the preſent divided State of the Church of GOD, and the too frequent Experience we have had of the pernicious Conſequences that attend Diviſions and Contentions, did perſuade to it! An exact Agreement in all Matters of *Opinion*, or *Conduct*, is not to be expected here. But where Differences do not affect the ſubſtantial Parts of religious Worſhip, or the Truth and Power of Godlineſs, 'tis Pity they ſhould break the Harmony of our Affections, or be car-

ried

ried ſo far, as to weaken the common Intereſt, hinder the Succeſs of the Goſpel, or obſtruct the Compoſure of our own Minds. It was the Glory of the primitive Church, that the *Diſciples were of one Mind*, that they *ſtrove together*, or with mutual Concert, *for the Faith of the Goſpel*. But we are fallen on evil Days; Days in *which Iniquity aboundeth, and the Love of many waxeth cold*. The Subject is too grievous, but it is paſſionately affecting. If there were *great Searchings of Heart, for the Diviſions of Reuben*, a ſingle *Tribe* in *Iſrael*, how much more may there be, for the Diſunion that is now to be obſerved, among the beſt ſort of Proteſtants. CHRIST left us a Legacy of *Peace*, but we neglect to execute his Will; and ſeem to act, as if not only the caſual Event, but the Deſign of our Lord's coming into the World, had been, not to create Peace and good Will upon Earth, but to create Diviſion. Atheiſm and Impiety, Hereſy and Prophaneneſs, grow through the Harmony of ungodly Men. Faith and Righteouſneſs, Truth and Charity, languiſh and die, through the hateful Animoſities of Chriſtian Brethren. *Is there no Balm in Gilead? Is there no Phyſician there?* Could the departed Saint but know, that every invidious Diſtinction, pernicious to *Truth* or *Peace*, with the real culpable Cauſes of them, were for ever ceas'd from

amongſt us, it would open a Spring of new Joy in Heaven.

GOD had plentifully poured upon his Servant *the Spirit of Grace and Supplication*, whereby he was eminently diſtinguiſh'd in *Prayer*; and being much employ'd in holy Meditation, he was always in a Temper meet for it. When he pray'd, an awful Senſe of the great GOD, and his adorable Perfections, was manifeſt in his whole Demeanor; but it was without any Precipitation of Spirit, or Confuſion of Thought. He came to that Work, as to his moſt delightful Food. His Mind was compos'd, his Soul enlarg'd, and his whole Heart united in what he was about. So that let the Occaſion be ever ſo uncommon, or ſudden, whether in private Families, or publick Aſſemblies, he would ſpread it out before GOD, with ſuch a Juſtneſs of Thought, with ſuch a Fulneſs and Suitableneſs of Expreſſion, and with ſuch rapturous Affections, as frequently was the Wonder, as well as Pleaſure and Profit of thoſe that join'd with him. How often, when Judgments were inflicted, or impending, has he ſtood in the Gap, like another *Moſes*, or a *Samuel*? And if the Prevalence of Prayer, with God, may be judg'd of by ſucceeding Events, he has often been remarkably heard: The Bleſſings he wreſtled for have been granted, and deprecated Evils removed or averted.

THERE

THERE is ſomething analogous in a *Miniſter's Work*, to the *Offices* of the MEDIATOR. It is in Subſerviency to the *chief Shepherd*, and *Biſhop of Souls*, that, as diligent *Paſtors*, they are to *watch over*, and *feed* the Flock. *Preaching* is a kind of *propheſying*, that will not ceaſe till CHRIST's ſecond Coming. Tho' they have no *Dominion* in the Church, to preſcribe Laws to Conſciences, to judge Mens eternal State, or to abſolve from Sin, yet it belongs to them to preſide in Church Aſſemblies, to proclaim the *Laws* of CHRIST, *the King eternal*, to require Obedience to them in his Name, to admoniſh and rebuke, to try Mens Title to external Communion, to approve of the Confeſſions of true Penitents, and to receive the *Righteous, that keep the Truth*, into the Boſom of the Church. They are *Interceſſors* alſo, and *Advocates* for the People, (without the monſtrous Claim of *ſacrificing Prieſts*) and, being exempted from meaner Services, are to *give themſelves continually to the Word, and Prayer*, and Adminiſtration of the *Sacraments* of the *New Teſtament*. In the Diſcharge of theſe Duties, he magnified the Redeemer, was a great Ornament to his Profeſſion, and an uncommon Bleſſing to the Church of GOD. In every Part of his various Work, he ſupported the Dignity and Sanctity of his *Office*, which he look'd upon as a divine Inſtitution.

ſtitution. He was very ſenſible that the firſt Step to *Infidelity*, was a Contempt of the *ſacred* ORDER, as a needleſs Thing, or as the mere Reſult of human Policy. Men will not much regard *that Religion*, the *Miniſtry of which*, they would have univerſally diveſted of all Reverence and Eſteem. He knew well, that the Ignorance and Lazineſs, the Pride, Covetouſneſs and Senſuality of many diſtinguiſh'd by that Character, was one great Occaſion of the Diſreſpect poured upon the Office itſelf. When Men ſcandalouſly neglect the *Work* of *their Calling*, or proſtitute it to vile or mean Purpoſes, no Wonder if others deſpiſe it. This Man of God *took heed to himſelf, and to the Miniſtry which he received from the Lord to fulfil it*. As he underſtood the Nature and Importance of the *miniſterial Work*, ſo he gave up himſelf to it as his *proper Buſineſs*, and *watch'd in all Things* to anſwer the Ends thereof, and maintain its due Honour in the Conſciences of Men.

HIS *perſonal Vertues* and *Graces* in every other Capacity, were equal to his *miniſterial Character*, and gave a beautiful Luſtre to it. When great Parts, and excellent Knowledge, meet with an unſanctified Heart, it is a very unhappy, and dangerous Conjunction; and moſt of all ſo in *Miniſters*; the Deſign of whoſe Office it is to raiſe and build up living Temples of GOD, from the

Ruins of the Apoſtacy. It appears that divine Grace prevented him early. He was ſanctified even from his Youth, and *feared God alway. If we ſay we have no Sin, we deceive ourſelves, and the Truth is not in us.* There are involuntary ſinful Infirmities that cleave to the beſt Men on Earth, which are lamented and ſtriven againſt by them. *The Law made Men Prieſts which had Infirmity*, and Goſpel *Miniſters* are *ſubject to like Paſſions as others are.* But this Servant of Chriſt was as free from Failures of that Kind as moſt that ever liv'd. Nor was he barely innocent, and free from all Blemiſhes that could aſperſe his high and holy Calling; but *the Power of Godlineſs* ſhone thro' his whole Courſe of Life.

His *Openneſs* of Mind, his *Singleneſs* of *Heart*, his *Simplicity* and *godly Sincerity*, appeared in all his Words and Actions, and were truly admirable: *He was an Iſraelite in whom there was no Guile.* We have heard of a *juſtifying Sincerity.* He had the Sincerity of the *Juſt.* His *Wiſdom* did not degenerate into *Craft.* No Man was more free from *carnal Motives*, and *ſiniſter Deſigns*, or had a more diſintereſted Regard to *Truth*, and *Goodneſs*, and *Righteouſneſs*, in whatever he ſaid, or did. He walk'd before God, with an upright Heart, and God *upheld him in his Integrity*, ſtill aſcending to Perfection, to the very laſt, that *he ſet him before his Face for ever.* He

He was a Man of great *Courage*, and *Stedfastneſs*, and acting always from *Judgment* and *Conſcience*; he was not to be *biaſs'd*, or *deterr'd* by the *Frowns* or *Flatteries* of Men. His Mind was always free and open to Conviction from inſtructing Reaſons and Arguments, upon this Conſideration, "that "he was fallible, and poſſibly the Error "might be his own, in what he differed "from others." But as he was exempt from thoſe Vices and Prejudices that commonly hinder the Reception of Truth, attended with clear Evidence, ſo, when upon mature Deliberation, and a diligent Uſe of the Means that are proper to give a true Senſe of Things, his Opinions or Purpoſes were fix'd, he was unmov'd in his Adherence to them, from any temporal Conſideration. Many were the Attempts made upon him in the ſeveral Stages of Life, that would have ſhaken a Reſolution leſs firm than his. The *agoniſtical* Phraſes ſo frequently uſed by St. *Paul*, to ſignify the *Chriſtian Race*, and *Warfare*, were juſtly applicable to him. But he never contended for mean or trivial Things. *He fought the good Fight.* The *Favour* of God, and the *incorruptible Crown*, not the Countenance of great Men, or the Gains of this World, empty and withering as a Garland of Leaves, were always in his Eye. This fortified him againſt all Impreſſions from Temptation. *He ſtood* in every

evil

evil Day. Like an experienc'd Officer, he had his Scars and Wounds that render'd him venerable, but he was invincible in the Cauſe of GOD, and always ready for its Defence, till the Captain of his Salvation, under whoſe Banner he fought, gave him Leave to die, and ſaid, well done, it is enough.

HIS whole Conduct in Life was exemplary, and worthy the ſacred Miniſtration he was employ'd in. He abounded in all the Exerciſes of *Piety* and Devotion. He lived and walked with God, and converſed, *as ſeeing him who is inviſible*. He was *blameleſs, as the Steward of God, a Lover of good Men*, and good Things, *ſober, juſt, holy, temperate*. His Soul was elevated above the Droſs of this *Earth*, and divinely purified from *its Affections*: His *Heart* and *Treaſure* being in another World, he had a noble and generous Contempt of this, and was but little affected with its Loſſes, tho' he ſuſtain'd ſome that were conſiderable. He had that *Humbleneſs of Mind* which made him very ſenſible of his own Defects, which he would aggravate, beyond what could be diſcerned by thoſe who beſt knew him. Tho' he had a large Share of the moſt excellent Gifts, he was far from being lifted up, but, with deepeſt Humility, acknowledg'd the rich Grace of God, and his own Unworthineſs. This made him

always ſpeak of CHRIST his *Saviour*, in ſo affectionate a Manner, as was ſurpriſingly moving. But tho' he thought meanly of himſelf, he was not backward to give others their due Praiſe. *In Lowlineſs of Mind he eſteemed others better than himſelf.* He was of a moſt *friendly Temper*, and being an utter Stranger to the deceitful Policies, and Diſguiſes of the World, his Friendſhip was greatly to be valued, and ſecurely to be confided in. He was *courteous* and *affable* in his Behaviour. Having been much converſant with Men of the beſt Rank and Education, there was nothing proudly ſtiff, or ſordid in his Carriage. His generous Soul diſdain'd all baſe Compliances. But as he fail'd not to pay due Reſpect to thoſe whom Providence, the Fountain of Honour, had diſtinguiſh'd by their Station and Circumſtances in the World, ſo he was kind and affable towards all Men. He received his Friends with an open Heart, and an endearing Countenance; and would meekly bear even with the Impertinencies of thoſe he convers'd with. There was nothing ſullen, moroſe, or imperious in his Temper. His *natural Warmth* was moſt ſeen in Expreſſions, and Actions of *Kindneſs*. He was *tender-hearted*, and compaſſionate both to the pitiful *Failings*, and *Miſeries* of others. He was not ſuppoſed to be *ſtrait* or *narrow* in his Principles, but was much leſs ſo in his *Bowels of Mercies*. The Afflictions, the

Sorrows,

Sorrows, and Neceſſities of others, would reach the very Depth of his Soul, and affect it with a Sympathy that was active for their Relief, as Matters would allow, or his Intereſt with others could be of uſe to procure them Help. He was *condeſcending* and *affectionate* to *younger Miniſters*, whom he would treat as Brethren. And tho' in an Argument, his ſuperior Capacity would often convince them of their Miſtake, it was in ſo obliging a Manner, that they were not diſcourag'd by it. So amiable a Perſon could not but be greatly eſteem'd and lov'd by all that knew him.

How holily and uprightly he walked before God in his own Houſe, is evident in the happy Succeſs of his Family Inſtructions, and Example, and the Joy he had in *ſeeing his Children walk in the Truth*, and anſwer the Engagements of their Covenant of Baptiſm. It may more become my Character, to exhort his ſurviving Relatives to preſs forward towards thoſe Things that are before, than to ſay any Thing that might look like a Commendation of what they have already attained to. But as he himſelf ſignified to ſeveral dear Friends, the great Comfort he had in his Family, and his well-grounded Hopes, that thoſe he left behind him were truly ſerious and religious, in a State of Grace and Favour with God, I hope this Mention of it will be rather a Spur to

Duty, than turn'd to an Argument of Security. And the like I would ſay to all who have reap'd Benefit from his *Miniſtry*, Converſation, or Example.

SECT. III.

Of his Sickneſs, and Death.

WE have now followed him to the laſt Stage of dying Life, in which the moſt reſolv'd, and beſt prepared for another World, ſtand in need of extraordinary divine Aſſiſtance, to enable them to act their Part well, and finiſh their Courſe in a Way becoming the Hope of eternal Life. And here alſo God put a peculiar Honour upon his Saint. It is a Mercy to ſome, who cannot ſo well bear a laſting conſcious Battel with *the King of Terrors*, that God takes them to himſelf, by ſome critical Diſtemper, that ſoon puts an End to the Combat. This tried *Soldier* of CHRIST had a long and ſenſible Engagement with that *Enemy*, in which his Soul was always triumphant. He had an ill State of Health many Months before his laſt Confinement, which frequently diſabled him from

publick Service. Thoſe who then convers'd with him, could not but obſerve that the more he was oppreſs'd with bodily Indiſpoſitions, the more flouriſhing and vigorous his Graces appeared to be. He was *ſtrong in Faith*, and not only *rejoic'd in*, but might juſtly be ſaid to live upon *the Hope of the Fruition of the Glory of God*. It has been particularly remark'd, that however the weak and low Condition of his Body, averſe even to the neceſſary Supplies of Nature, might, in lower Things, affect his Strength of Mind, yet when the great Subjects of Religion, eſpecially thoſe that related to the *Perſon* and *Offices* of CHRIST, his *Doctrine*, and *Rewards*, were talk'd of, it was not poſſible to diſcern the leaſt Impair of his Judgment, or Memory. So deep a Root had theſe heavenly Matters taken in his Soul, that the Ideas of them outlaſted all Perception of every other Thing. This was moſt evident in his laſt Sickneſs.

HE took his Bed the *third* of *March*, and was confined above *eight Weeks*. In this long Struggle with Death, he ſuffered, and endured glorioufly. His natural Life ſeem'd to be more ſupported by the immediate Power of GOD, than by any Helps adminiſtred by ſecond Cauſes, tho' he had the conſtant Advice of ſome of the ableſt *Phyſicians*, and the Advantage of a diligent Attendance, Day and Night. But *though the*

outward Man periſhed, the inward was renewed, and purified, *Day by Day*. And for this Cauſe he fainted not, though often exerciſed with great Sickneſs, and ſtrong Pains. He was a prime Favourite of Heaven, and had his ardent Wiſh granted him, That upon juſt and holy Grounds, honourable to God, and the Religion he profeſs'd, as well as ſafe to himſelf, he might look Death in the Face without Fear.

His *Patience* and *Reſignation* were ſurpriſing to all about him. His only Fear ſeemed to be, leſt he ſhould think himſelf hardly dealt with, by that God whom he had ſerved with a perfect Heart. Turning to his affected Conſort, and ſcarce recover'd from a painful and weary Hour, "Have I "(ſaid he) made any Complaint of my dear "Redeemer? It were unworthy in me, if "I have; for what I have felt is nothing to "what Sin deſerves." Thus tho' he groan'd, he did not repine, nor allow himſelf under his ſore Affliction, to expreſs the leaſt Rebellion. *Not my Will, but thine be done*, were Words frequently uttered by him, and with ſuch patient Meekneſs, as ſhew'd his real Conformity to Christ. We find in Scripture, that even good Men have too precipitantly wiſh'd for Death, and been impatient of Life, when overwhelm'd with a Variety of grievous Troubles; or, when under unjuſt Cenſures, cruel and bitter Reproaches, for

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the faithful Diſcharge of their Duty, *their Days have been conſumed with Shame*; which was the Caſe of the Prophet *Jeremiah*, and is the common Lot of the faithful Servants of God in all Generations. Mr. *Robinſon* was not exempt from theſe Kinds of Suffering, nor inſenſible under them. But tho' he long'd to be at *Reſt*, he was willing to wait God's Time, and humbly to ſubmit to whatever he ſhould farther ſee fit to lay upon him, before he gave him his Releaſe. Hence, he often pray'd that his *Faith* and *Patience* might not *fail*. Nor did they fail, being abundantly ſupplied from that *Fountain of Life, which is with* GOD.

HIS *ſpiritual Rewards* were in Proportion to his great Piety, and eminent Virtues. They are but few who attain to that unaſſaulted Height of the *Aſſurance of Faith*, which this Man of God was privileged with. He often told his Friends, and that after ſolemn Reviews of his Frame and State, *that his Covenant with God ſtood firm, and all was well within.* He was not only not deſtitute of ſpiritual Comfort, but frequently felt a glorified Joy. A worthy Miniſter, who viſited him a few Days before he was taken ſpeechleſs, gave me the following Account of ſome Part of their Converſation. " I found him in a moſt heavenly Frame. The Grace that was in him

him ſhin'd forth with a wonderful Strength and Luſtre, as it had done all the Time of his Sickneſs. Enquiring how it was with him, he replied, Exceeding weak in Body, but as to the State of his Soul, he could ſay it was well with him, and that Matters had of a long Time been ſettled between God and him, upon a good and ſolid Foundation. He declared again and again, that he had no Darkneſs, no not a Cloud *to interpoſe between him and the chearful Light of God's Countenance*; that he was full of Peace, and felt an inward Joy that was unſpeakable. Upon his *Friends* ſaying, *Sir*, this is Heaven in the Beginnings of it; he anſwered, with Tears of Conſolation, It is Heaven! and if ſo much is to be enjoyed here, what ſhall we enjoy in the celeſtial Glory? Speaking of the Uſe GOD had made of him in the *Miniſtry*, he ſaid, He had the Witneſs in himſelf, that from the Time of his firſt devoting himſelf to his LORD and MASTER JESUS CHRIST, in that honourable and bleſſed Work, he had made it his Buſineſs to ſerve him faithfully, to that very Day. Reflecting on his great Weakneſs, and approaching Diſſolution, he ſaid, That as he found his Infirmities increaſing upon him, ſo he found his inward Pleaſures, from the Proſpect of that Happineſs which was before him, to grow in Proportion. His Friend obſerves, That all the Faculties of his Mind ſeemed as ſprightly and vigorous, as if he

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ailed nothing." The like Remarks I have heard from many others of his Brethren.

THESE Vouchsafements were the genuine Fruits of that *Faith*, from which a deep Conviction of our own *manifold Defects* is inseparable. He was very sensible that he could not balance his Accounts with GOD, or stand before him in Judgment, without an Interest in CHRIST's Righteousness, which he affectionately regarded as the Foundation of all his Hopes. One that admir'd and honour'd him much, putting him in Mind of the great Services he had done to the Cause of Religion, and that *God was not unrighteous, or unmerciful, to forget those Works and Labours of Love, which he had shewed towards his Name*; he returned this Answer, That he himself could not say, all was *well done*, that *he had done*, but he had to do with a *merciful* GOD, and knew who said, *well done*. The last Words he repeated, and was going on, till that Person observing how weak he was, and yet with what Vehemence he spoke, prevented him in Words to this Effect; *Sir*, I doubt not but you feel that gracious Sentence, *Well done, good and faithful Servant, enter into the Joy of your* LORD, to take Place already in your Conscience; and it will e're long be pronounced in a more perfect Manner, before the holy Angels, and the Spirits of the Just, from the blissful

Throne. To this he replied, That he did feel it to take Place, and was aſſured of its full Accompliſhment through the Merits of his dear Redeemer. When it was obſerved on that Occaſion, how inexcuſable we ſhould be, who had not only the *Word* of GOD to direct us in our Duty, and aſcertain our Reward, if faithful, but ſuch an Inſtance before us, as rendred the Objects of our Faith and Hope, in a Manner viſible, if we were not *Followers of them, who through Faith and Patience did* ſo apparently *inherit the* Promiſes; he applied, with an endearing Appellation, to the Perſon that ſpake, in the Words of St. *Paul*, *Be ye ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord*, and I can aſſure you from my own Experience, founded on God's Promiſe, that *your Labour ſhall not be in vain in the* LORD. Such Teſtimony he gave, both living and dying, to the *Truth* and *Excellency* of our holy *Faith*.

THE *ſolemn* CHARGE he gave his *Children*, when taking his laſt Farewel of his Family, is worthy to be recorded as an Example to others. "You are, ſays he, to "my certain Knowledge, the Children "of the Covenant, for four or five Gene"rations. Do not ſuffer the Entail to be "cut off. It would be a great Surprize to "me, (if Heaven could admit of ſuch a "Thing) to find at laſt you have loſt your

" Way thither. I devoted you to God in
" *Baptiſm*, when Infants; and you have
" confirmed it by your publick and ſolemn
" Engagements to him at *the Lord's Table*.
" Remember, the Vows of God are upon
" you. If you forſake him, you contract
" double Guilt, and muſt expect a heavier
" Doom and Puniſhment." To his youngeſt Child, with the ſame fatherly Affection and Concern, he recommended the Words of dying *David*, to *Solomon*, *Know thou the God of thy Father, and ſerve him with a perfect Heart, and with a willing Mind: For the Lord ſearcheth all Hearts, and underſtandeth all the Imaginations of the Thoughts: If thou ſeek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forſake him, he will caſt thee off for ever.*

THE laſt Words he was heard to ſpeak in this holy Strain, were thoſe of *Simeon*, when he had *his Saviour* in his Arms, which he uſed by way of chearful, and triumphant commending his departing Soul to God; *Now, Lord, letteſt thou thy Servant depart in Peace, for mine Eyes have ſeen thy Salvation:* And *with theſe Eyes I ſhall ſee thy Glory.*

AFTER this Manner he ſpent many weary Days, and painful Nights, continually rejoicing in God, and doing all the Good he could, till at length his Sickneſs pre-

vailed over what was mortal and conquerable in him. His *Trial* was long, but it was *refining*, and *more precious than that of Gold, tho' upon Trial it endure the Fire*, and ſhall *be found to his Praiſe, and Honour, and Glory, at the appearing of* JESUS CHRIST, in whom he quietly *fell aſleep*, on Thurſday, *April* 30, at one in the Morning.

THUS *lived*, and thus *died* this excellent Man, concerning whom, a valuable Perſon, who for many Years was his faithful *Collegue* juſtly obſerves, "We have loſt out of our "World (if I may call it ſo) one *whom*, "truly, *the World was not worthy of*, and "whoſe Value will be beſt known by the "Want of him, when the Time may come, "that Mr. *Robinſon*'s Preſence, Integrity, "accurate Judgment, and undaunted Cou-"rage, will be call'd for, but cannot be "had. His Death has made thoſe Wounds "in his own Family, which none but God "can heal. His People have loſt a moſt ac-"compliſh'd, and moſt faithful Miniſter of "God's Word, a Workman that needed not "to be aſhamed, and *ſhall know that they* "*had a Prophet amongſt them.* The *Poor* "have loſt a *Patron*, the *Widow* an *Ad-*"*vocate*, the *Orphan* a *Father*, the *Young* "a *Guide*, the *ſick* and *dying* Chriſtian, a "tender Friend, and the obſtinate *Sinner* a "faithful *Monitor*.

BUT

BUT he is removed from us; our Eyes ſhall ſee him no more, nor ſhall we be inſtructed, or charm'd any more with his Voice. Let us never loſe the ſweet Remembrance of him. The great Cauſe to which he was attach'd, and in which he labour'd with Watchfulneſs and Conſtancy, ſtill ſurvives. Let us therefore be Followers of him, as he was of CHRIST. Let us be affected with *our Loſs*, and the *Loſs* of the *Church* of GOD. All obſtinate unbelieving Grief, this Occaſion abſolutely forbids, for he is *with the* LORD: But it becomes us ſo to reſent our own Loſs, as thereby to be induc'd to reflect upon our Sins, leſt our Indolence and Security provoke GOD not to ſtay his Hand, but to remove other great Inſtruments of his Glory from us.

I SHALL conclude the whole, with the Words of a moſt worthy *Miniſter* of CHRIST *, (the Continuance of whoſe Life and Labours, the preſent Neceſſities of the Church of God among us, do greatly require, and all good People ardently wiſh for) delivered in a *Tueſday's Lecture* at *Salter's-Hall*, ſoon after Mr. ROBINSON's Death, and in which his *Character* is ſum-

* The *Reverend* Mr. *Tong*.

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med up. On that Occaſion, exhorting his Hearers to *pray to the* LORD *of the Harveſt*, &c. He had the following Expreſſions, " Have we not lately loſt ſeveral *faithful* " *Labourers* in this *Goſpel Harveſt*; and " ſome that uſed to Labour in *this Place* " on ſuch Occaſions as theſe? I am ſure " we have very lately loſt ONE, that was " eminently diligent, skilful, and faithful; " who, by the Depth of his Thoughts, " Strength of his Judgment, Serioufneſs of " Spirit, lively Affections, a grave and moſt " proper Expreſſion, and exemplary Life, " greatly honour'd CHRIST, and the Goſpel. " How did he, when ſenſibly dying, tri- " umph over Death in this Pulpit, in thoſe " heavenly Diſcourſes he preach'd upon that " Scripture, *the laſt Enemy that ſhall be* " *deſtroyed is Death*? Nor was it only a " Pulpit Flouriſh: He continued thus to " triumph in *Chriſt Jeſus*, as long as his " Apprehenſion and Speech laſted. Thus " he honour'd GOD *living* and *dying*. For " my Part, I can ſay without Flattery, I ſel- " dom heard him preach, but I went away " bleſſing God, and taking Shame to my- " ſelf. *Pray therefore to the Lord of the* " *Harveſt*, for many Labourers can hardly " make up this Loſs.

FINIS.

BRITISH MUSEUM

ERRATA.

PAGE 67. Line 16, for *any*, read *airy*. Pag. 86. l. 16. for *affected*, r. *afflicted*.

Publiſhed by the ſame AUTHOR.

I. THE *general Corruptions and Defection of the preſent Times, as to Matters of Religion; with other threatning Symptoms*, &c. conſider'd in a Diſcourſe preach'd at *Newport-Pagnel*, in the County of *Bucks*, *July* 14, 1714. before an Aſſociation of *Miniſters*; wherein are laid down the Duties that are immediately incumbent upon Chriſtians, with reſpect to the preſent State of Religion among us; with an *Addreſs* to *Diſſenting Miniſters*; containing a brief Vindication of *Proteſtant Diſſenters* from the Charge of *Schiſm*, occaſion'd by the BILL *for preventing the Growth of Schiſm.*

II. REMARKS on Dr. BENTLY's Sermon upon POPERY, preach'd before the Univerſity of *Cambridge*, *Nov.* 5, 1715.

III. *The Conſpiracies of evil-deſigning Men againſt* the real *Intereſts of* CHRIST's *Kingdom*, &c. and their Diſappointments. A Sermon preach'd at FOUNDER's-HALL, *Nov.* 5. 1717, containing brief Remarks on ſome Paſſages in Dr. SNAPE's Vindication, *&c.*

IV. ADVICE

IV. ADVICE *to Christians to contend for the* FAITH *once delivered to the Saints*: Being a Diſcourſe to a *Society* of young Men in *Jewen-ſtreet*, on *Eaſter-Monday*, 1719, with large marginal Notes: Shewing, 1. That the Triumphs of the ARIANS, on the Head of the GENERATION of the Son, are groundleſs. 2. That the Characters of SUPREMACY are applied to our LORD in Scripture. 3. That plain Scripture CONSEQUENCES are to be regarded as Matters of REVELATION, *&c.*

V. THE Grounds of the preſent Differences, among the *London* Miniſters. In two Parts. Part I^ſt. A Diſſertation concerning the Authority of Scripture Conſequences in Matters of Faith: Being an Anſwer to Mr. *Evans*'s Letter. To which is added, A Poſtſcript relating to the Sonſhip of CHRIST; ſhewing the Uncertainty of the main Principle on which the *Arians* found their Faith in a dependent GOD, with a particular Reference to Dr. *Clarke*'s Scheme. Part II^d. Conſiderations on the profeſs'd Agreement of the Non-ſubſcribing Miniſters, with the Subſcribers, in their Sentiments concerning the Doctrine of the Trinity: Wherein ſome of the principal Paſſages in both Parts of the Reply are impartially examined, and the Subſcribers clear'd from the Charge of Impoſition.

Printed for JOHN CLARK *and* RICHARD HETT.